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[THE RECOGNITION.]

BASIL RIVINGTON'S ROMANCE.

CHAPTER X.

Mark'd you her artless smiles that speak
The language, written on her cheek?
Where bright as morn and pure as dew
The bosom's thoughts arise to view?
And felt you not, as I now feel,
Delight no tongue could e'er reveal?

MARMADUKE RIVINGTON took possession of his inheritance. His wife's life-long ambition was fulfilled, she was the "squire's lady," the mistress of Rivington House, the lady bountiful of the parish. Her daughter, a pretty, wilful girl, enjoyed her new honours.

Her husband was happy and contented, but Mrs. Rivington did not reap that keen enjoyment she had believed riches would bring to her. Despite her errors of heart and head, she was capable of warm, true affection, and it was all centred on her eldest child, her only son.

She saw their accession to wealth brought him no joy, that he went about with a cloud on his handsome face, a listless air, and grave, dejected manner. She took a fancy that he was in debt, and taxed him with it.

Duke answered with a quiet reserve, "that he did not owe a halfpenny in the world." Nor did he. The day after his parting with Ida Colville he had gone bravely to his father and frankly told him of his difficulties.

Pleased at the confidence reposed in him, and perhaps gratified at the prospect of outdoing his shrewd wife, Marmaduke had responded generously by giving his heir a cheque to the full amount of his debts.

So Duke was free. "He could look the whole world in the face, for he owed not any man."

So her fears on that score being set at rest, his mother changed her mind and said that he was dull.

Her will was law, so she filled the stately mansion with guests, gave balls and dinner parties, went out to them in return; but her scheme did not answer. Duke was courteous and attentive to the visitors. He hunted with the men, danced with the girls talked to the dowagers, but all the time his heart was far away.

He wondered how his girlish love was living, how she prospered in the stern battle of life, and he would reproach himself that he should be idling in the lap of luxury, while she, in all her delicate beauty, with all her youth and inexperience, was out in the world, friendless and alone, with no one to cheer or pity her as she toiled for daily bread.

For daily bread! He could not realize it. There was something so dainty, so fragile about Ida, that he could not associate her with poverty, could not imagine her working for money.

Many a pretty girl and some beautiful ones crossed his path, but he remained faithful and true. That August day had proved a turning point in his life. Had Ida accepted the sacrifice he offered to her, he might have repented of it, but she had refused it, and he lived now only to show her he could never change.

In the dull November time he went up to London, avowedly to visit Percy Harcourt, his old college friend, really to try to catch a glimpse of the fair face so dear to him.

Love is a wondrous power, but it can hardly find its object when the only clue to her whereabouts is that she is in London.

London is such a large place, there are so many lonely women there, working and waiting, that to find one of them without any clue is difficult—nay, well nigh impossible.

Percy Harcourt welcomed his friend warmly, it was some months since they had met, and he was struck with the change in Duke.

"What's up, Rivington?" he said one evening

when they were sitting tête-à-tête in the embryo painter's cosy study. "You seem as dull as though you had just lost a fortune instead of come into one."

"I haven't come into one."

"Well, your father has, it's the same thing in the end, or will be. You used to be as lively as a trooper and now you're as solemn as a bear."

"I'm not solemn, Percy, I'm only sobered down."

"Are you in debt?"

"That's what every one keeps asking me; to my knowledge I don't owe a sou, and what's more I don't mean to in future."

Percy Harcourt was too delicate to press the subject, he took up another.

"Now I really ought to be lugubrious. My father's last company has failed, and being the possessor of a single share I am involved to the enormous extent of two pounds ten."

"So much won't break the bank, you'll recover that, Percy, I imagine."

"I hope so, but it's a dreadful disappointment to all of them."

"It must be rather a queer sensation, Percy, to have two fathers."

"It used to be. I often lamented that I was not what the world called me, Percy Harcourt."

"But you are, to all intents and purposes."

"Who do you think called on the governor to-day?"

"Give it up."

"Mrs. Basil Rivington."

Duke threw away the end of his cigar and started up, exclaiming, "Good gracious, what for?"

"The great desideratum of womankind in general. If you give them it, they bless you, if you don't they feel inclined to hate you; in plain English, money."

"What did he say—Mr. Harcourt, I mean?"

"Informed her that he had long since resigned the position of Mr. Rivington's legal adviser. She was very violent, and it was a great trouble to get rid of her."

"Thy uncle must have been mad to marry such a creature."

"Oh, I daresay she angled pretty skillfully for him; women generally do. So long as a man is prosperous they purr at him; when his money's gone, then they begin to show their claws."

"Your opinion of the sex does not appear to be particularly high."

"It is very low. Pretty, pampered dolls who spend their husbands' money and run them into debt, neglect their children and gad about from ball to theatre and theatre to ball, like gay, thoughtless butterflies."

"You say this and yet you have a mother."

"Aye, she is one of the exceptions which only prove the rule—a patient world worn woman, almost tired out with perpetual troubles, but with a warm love for her children and a deep faith in her husband still."

"And yet you despise the sex."

"I don't exactly despise them. I steer clear of them and only desire they should leave me in peace."

"Mind you never marry."

"Trust me, I love my freedom too well. I hope I have not touched a sore point; perhaps" with a pleasant smile, "you have fallen a victim to the attractions of some fair maid, wife or widow; if so, I will promise to consider the highly favoured lady as quite exempt from all the faults and follies of her sex."

Time had not passed very brightly with Mrs. Basil Rivington since that warm August day when she had entered into the library of Livingston House on the occasion of her husband's funeral.

She was then very much in debt; the landlady of her snug furnished apartments, knowing how she received her allowance, had always assigned quarterly payments. The tradesman with whom she dealt had followed this example; but when September came and Mrs. Basil received no money, and consequently paid no debts, all these good people grew rampant and served her with writs, the landlady turned her out, summer friends fought shy of her, and altogether she was in as bad a plight as she well could be.

Then she sank from bad to worse, everything she could lay hands on she disposed of to satisfy her craving for drink.

She took a little low lodging far from her former haunts, and there night after night as soon as it was dark she might have been seen leaning with some parcel concealed under her dark shawl; she stopped first at the pawnbroker's, a shop which did a large trade, whose owner was growing rich again, growing rich by the misfortunes of others.

She used to leave the parcel there and then come out with a few shillings, or sometimes a few coppers only in its stead. Her next visit would be quite a different place, where all was warm and comfortable, where there was a brilliant flare of gaslight, and the sparkle of much glass and shining pewter, and there sitting down among men and women, who like herself were sinking slowly yet surely, lower and lower, she would spend the money in quarters of mountain dew, and then, when it was all gone, come unsteadily out and drag herself home to her wretched lodgings, another step nearer death.

Night after night this little panorama was enacted until there was nothing left to be taken to the establishment with the three golden balls: then Mrs. Basil went and told her wretched story to George Harcourt; he dismissed her as we have already heard, but after all she was Basil Rivington's widow, the mother of the little unconscious child who lay in Highgate Cemetery, and the solicitor so far relented that he wrote to Marmaduke a simple statement of facts, and asked somewhat pointedly whether he intended to make any provision for his brother's widow.

Before many days had passed a reply came from Blackshire, not from the warm-hearted Marmaduke, but from the pen of his exemplary wife, who, amongst other arduous duties, had undertaken those of private secretary to her husband.

"They could not," wrote Elizabeth, "with their vast responsibilities, undertake any but a most moderate allowance to the wife of their late lamented brother, but they would be happy to put aside a sum of twenty-six pounds yearly for her sole use and maintenance during the term of her natural life, and they would esteem it a favour if Mr. Harcourt would undertake to pay the same to Mrs. Basil in weekly sums of ten shillings each."

Even the genial George Harcourt sneered a little when he read the letter, and as to Percy, henceforth he counted meanness among the many crimes he was apt to impute to womenkind.

"What a miser that Mrs. Rivington must be. Duke certainly does not take after her."

"No; Duke has the making of a noble man in him. I used to fear he would be rash and heedless, now I am sure that he will be generous, honest, upright and true."

"But he seems wonderfully changed; all his life and spirits are quite crushed out of him."

"He will get over that."

So George Harcourt became Mrs. Basil's (as to avoid confounding her with her sister-in-law, the prudent Elizabeth, we will continue to call her) banker, and every week he despatched half a sovereign to her miserable abode.

Had she been saying she might perhaps have subsisted pretty well on this sum, though certainly it was not a mine of wealth, but she had no control over money.

She had the sense to pay her shilling for rent every Monday, but the rest of the money went, she knew not where, and by Friday she often wanted bread.

A shilling a week sounds wondrous little to pay for lodgings; but it was all that the proprietor of a tiny attic in Paradise Row demanded for its occupation, and in time Mrs. Basil grew quite used to the ways of the court, and suspended her piece of string from her own easement to the one opposite with wondrous ease whenever she wished to engage in laundry work, which was not often.

She still continued to patronise the pawnbroker, regularly pledging things on Friday, and taking them out on Monday, but all her available money went at the "Black Ball," which she visited with even greater frequency than her father Naggs.

Here too she made that worthy's acquaintance. Truly they were kindred spirits.

Oh! who would have thought that such a woman could have been the companion of the fastidious, high-born Basil Rivington, the one whom above all others he had sworn to love and cherish.

CHAPTER XI.

DADDY GREY was dead.

It was days before the truth came home to Bella in all its force. It was not until she stood before her father's grave and heard the clergyman's solemn voice proclaim "dust to dust" that she fully realized her loss, then, when they had hidden him for ever from her sight, she went back to the little dreary room his presence had made home, and realized it, if possible, more bitterly.

But the poor cannot afford much time for waiting or lamentations. Before two days had passed since the humble burial, Bella was preparing to leave the room she had so long called home and seek for herself a place among that patient, suffering world, whom stern necessity, not choice, has forced to become bread-winners.

She was fortunate. She went through no such tedious waiting as had chilled and disappointed Ida Colville. In less than a week she was engaged at a small third-rate milliner's, where, in return for incessant toil with her nimble fingers, she was to receive her keeping and the handsome salary of three shillings a week, wherewith to provide for herself lodging and dress.

Mrs. Cuffins, the mistress of the dingy little shop, was a widow of crabbed temper and very limited means. Her business was not a thriving one, and perhaps she really could not afford to offer her young assistant higher remuneration; but she might have refrained from the slights and perpetual grumblings which made the young girl's life a weariness; she might have given her a kindly word occasionally, have seemed pleased with her efforts, but this was not Mrs. Cuffins' plan at all.

Bella Grey was her paid assistant, and when she laid down the three weekly shillings she conceived that her part of the contract was fulfilled, and all the obligations lay on the opposite side, and beyond fretful complaints or angry orders she never troubled Bella with much conversation.

The girl was apt and skilful, she fulfilled her duties well and properly, but the constant fault-finding tired her; she missed the free, unfettered life she had used to lead, she missed the tender father who had always been ready to stand 'twixt her and trouble. Her round cheeks grew pale and thin, she always felt tired, and when work was over she crept languidly home—not to the little rooms where her father had died, but to a tiny attic in the same house, for the use of which she paid the same amount as Mrs. Basil Rivington.

Sundays were restful days to Bella. She did not go near the dingy, gloomy little shop. She stayed at home in the attic, or when it was fine and bright she would wrap herself in her shawl and, with her frugal dinner in her pocket, walk to the gay world that lay beyond the eastern suburb where all her life had been spent, and she would watch the idle denizens of fashion with a wistful interest, as though they were beings from another globe; for, in spite of poverty and trouble, Bella had a strong love for all that was bright and beautiful.

She did not envy her wealthier sisters; only sometimes the thought would come, how happy she

might have been had her fate been such as theirs.

The park was Bella's playground, the spot where her brightest time was passed.

The weather grew dull and cold, yet still she went, just to peep at pleasures she might not share. The neighbours were kind to her. Mother Naggs even softened when she saw how thin and worn the girl grew, and she would abuse Mrs. Cuffins in no measured terms.

Her son Bill was bashful and sheepish-looking, but he liked the dark-eyed girl whom he sometimes saw in his mother's room. He would have walked miles to do her a kindness or to save her trouble.

Bill was an honest, plain-spoken young man of three-and-twenty, by trade a carpenter, and earning the luxurious wages of eighteen shillings a week. He did not live at home, probably his mother's temper and his father's owed submission made it anything but a pleasant place, but in those autumn days he grew to linger there as he had never done before. He began to think how very dull it was to live alone, and how the presence and companionship of a nice little wife would brighten up his life.

He never said a word of love, but he followed Bella about when he met her at his mother's with a direct devotion that was touching in its very alliance.

One afternoon, early in December, Mrs. Cuffins had despatched her assistant to make some purchases at no great distance. It was a fine, bright day, the winter sun shone and the air was clear and frosty.

Stopping quickly along, with something of the old colour and something very like her old smile, Bella forgot how sad and hard was her lot; she forgot for a moment even reality, and a little bag that had been hanging on her arm snapped its chain and fell unheeded to the ground.

She had gone some steps, unconscious of her loss, when a firm tread sounded behind her and a clear, manly voice said:

"I think you have lost this."

The speaker was a young man of handsome appearance and aristocratic bearing. His large, dark eyes were bent on Bella with no unfriendly gaze, and he smiled kindly as he handed her her truant property.

Before she could take it from him, almost before she had heard his voice, another girl came face to face with them and then brushed hurriedly past, not so hurriedly but that Bella saw that she was noble, young and beautiful, that her hair was of real sunny brown, her eyes of intense, luminous blue, her complexion fair and delicate, contrasting well with her simple mourning; not so hastily but that the stranger, who still held the bag, recognized in her an old acquaintance.

For one second their eyes met. He stood transfixed with surprise.

Before he recovered himself the apparition had vanished down some side street, and he was standing alone with Bella.

His eyes sparkled with a sharp light, his voice was agitated as he asked:

"Do you know that lady?"

"I never saw her before to-day."

He sighed.

"I beg your pardon. Here is your bag." He continued, after a pause: "Where does that street lead to?"

"Middleton Street. Did you want to find out the lady's name?"

"No, I am sure of that. I wanted to find her."

Bella was romantic. She knew by instinct he was in love, and she wished that she could help him—he looked so brave and handsome, so generous and true.

"I think I could find out. I know someone in the street, and she could tell me, perhaps."

"You would be doing me a great favour, how great you perhaps cannot tell."

He bent his eyes once more upon her face and smiled his frank, kind eyes.

Poor Bella, why was she always seeing joy coming to others, but never to herself.

"I will try," she answered.

"And how will you let me know? Do you live here?"

"Not very near; but I will come and tell you if you say where."

It was a strange offer, but neither Bella nor Marmaduke Rivington, Jun., thought of that. He accepted it with alacrity, the spot and house for their conference were agreed upon, and the little milliner, utterly forgetful of Mrs. Cuffins' wrath, turned into Middleton Street and gave a modest tap at a house at the farther end.

She did not have to wait long. Soon the motherly face of Mrs. Chub appeared.

She recognized the girl who had shown kindness to Liz, and she welcomed her right heartily.

"Let's, now, see this little Bella. Ah! why hasn't

ye been near me afore? I've often thought of ye an' wondered as 'ow ye didn't come."

Then, as she looked closer and saw the girl's wan, thin features and the sadness no fleeting smile would hide, she asked:

"An' what's the matter, honey—what's been doing to look like that? The sayther hasn't ill, he he?"

Tears came to the soft eyes.

"Oh, Mrs. Chub, he's dead, and I'm all alone."

"Poor little 'un. There, there, come right down an' tell me all about it."

Obedient to this invitation, Bella soon found herself in the best kitchen.

What was her surprise when she saw the girl about whom she had been questioning so closely sitting in a corner by the fire.

"There now!" murmured Bella to herself, "and she just is beautiful. I wish I was like that, with those white mites of hands and all that bright hair, then perhaps some one like him would love me. I'm sure he loves her, else why did he ask about her? I wonder who she is. How glad I am that I can tell him."

"Miss Ida," said Mrs. Chub, "this is Bella."

Bella wondered she did not say who Bella was, as the young lady could not possibly be expected to know.

She wondered still more when the latter rose up and herself led her to a chair, and then took both her hands in her own white ones and kissed her softly on the cheek.

"How strange that she should care to kiss me," thought Mrs. Cuffins' humble drudge. "And, oh, what a good time shall have when they're married. There's always good times coming to somebody, only I don't seem to be in it. I wish I was—oh! I wish I was!"

After a little pleasant chat Mrs. Chub bustled out, intent on hospitable cares, and the two girls were left alone.

Then Ida Colville went up to Daddy Grey's daughter and asked, gently:

"Who was that with you?"

"I don't know, miss."

This was strictly the truth, for in her hurry and bewilderment she had forgotten to inquire his name.

"Did he ask you about me?"

"Yes."

To her amazement, the bright being she had unconsciously envied knelt down at her feet and, clasping her hands together, said:

"Bella, long ago you were kind to Lizzie Chub, now will you be kind to me?"

Bella felt drawn two ways. She could not be fickle to that handsome stranger, with his kind blue eyes. On the other hand, ought she to betray the beautiful creature who knelt to her?

"I can guess all, Bella. He wants to find me and he asked you to help him."

"Yes."

"Not many months ago, Bella, that gentleman formed part of my daily life. He saw me frequently, I talked to him, drove with him, and danced with him."

"And loved him!" put in Bella, kindly.

"No, I don't think so. A time came when I had to leave the place I called home and commenced to earn my living. Then he came to say good-bye. I never knew till then how good he was. He wanted to give up all—home, friends, everything for me. He asked me to be his wife."

"And you?"

"I felt how good he was—I thanked him for his love, I could have blessed him—but I refused the sacrifice. I could not take it, for I did not love him."

"But are you sure?"

"Quite. He must not waste his years in waiting for me. He deserves to be happy, to have a wife fairer, more nobly born than I."

"But if he loves you?"

"He must forget me. If he never sees me; if he believes that I am lost; that I can never be more to him than I am now—then he will not remember his love, or if he does, only as a folly of the past."

Bella was silent.

How could any one refuse to be at that handsome stranger's side, to be his companion for life; the sharer of his joys and sorrows, his heart's best love.

It seemed too strange, but one glance into the pale face told her that for weal or woe Ida's resolution was fixed.

"What would you have me do?"

"Keep silent as to my whereabouts, answer no questions. Tell him, if you will, that I am well; that the struggle is not so very hard; that I have chosen my path for once and for all, and while life is left I will not change."

Bella did not answer; but a rattling of tea things announced that Mrs. Chub was approaching. She must delay no longer.

"I will tell him."

"Thank you."

"Only are you quite sure? Won't you one day want the love you don't care for now?"

"No."

And then Mrs. Chub entered with the tea, and after it was over Bella took her leave.

Her hostess bade her an affectionate farewell and bid her come again soon.

Ida kissed her with her full red lips, and spoke one word—"Remember."

"Dear me," soliloquised Bella, as she walked rapidly home; "how queer it is, love comes to them as doesn't want it, and others stand by can't have a bit of it. Good times seems to come to every one but me. Oh, dear, I wish some one would love me like he does her. It must be so nice to feel some one thinks a whole heap of you. 'How pretty she is, and how good; but why doesn't she love him? Seems a pity one doesn't love the one who loves us; we should be happier.'"

And then like a flash of lightning she recollected Mrs. Cuffins, and her probable anger at her late return.

CHAPTER XII.

Mrs. Cuffins was not quite so exasperated as Bella Grey had feared.

A certain prosperous grocer, on whose hand and heart the bereaved widow had secret designs, chanced to drop in to tea, and the absence of her little assistant was therefore rather agreeable than otherwise, for though Mrs. Cuffins did not for one moment believe that Bella's charms surpassed, or even equalled, her own, yet she was varied enough in the whimsies of mankind to know that they are not always blessed with discriminating powers, and it was just possible Mr. Honeyman might have the bad taste to prefer Bella's dark eyes and clear complexion to her own more mature attractions.

Beyond the shop was a tiny parlour, furnished with high-back horsehair chairs, which looked as though they had never been intended to be sat upon, and if anyone were disrespectful enough to take such a liberty, revenged their slighted dignity by rendering the unhappy wight as uncomfortable as possible.

There was also a sofa to match, which held two, and a round deal table, covered with a very gay cloth, a little cheap clock, which lost on an average three hours a day, two lat china shepherdesses, and a portrait of the late lamented Mr. Cuffins, were spread out in solemn state upon the mantelpiece.

In this room, Mrs. Cuffins had spread out a little feast quite early in the afternoon.

The best teapot, specially rubbed up for the occasion, a glass milk jug, and actually two best silver teaspoons.

A dish of wafery bread and butter, another of shrimps and poriwinkles (Mr. Honeyman loved "whelks" to excess), and a plain cake, which had been made and baked by the widow's own fingers that very day.

Five o'clock—six o'clock arrived, and no one came.

Mrs. C. grew cross and fidgety. Customers were few and far between.

She had only sold one bonnet shape and half a yard of frilling, which did not improve her temper. At last she grew thirsty, and, and retiring to the parlour, poured herself out a cup of tea.

Hardly had she raised the fragrant liquid to her lips when a modest knock came at the partition which screened off the parlour from the shop.

The door was pushed open, and Mr. Honeyman's head appeared, to be followed presently by his shoulders, and finally by his whole person.

Not a very small person either; he stood six feet odd, without his boots, and he was wide in proportion.

His face was large and red, his eyes small and blue, his hair was of a nondescript brown, and so plastered down, as to raise the suspicion that he had applied to it some of his own tallow. The top of his head was bald, and he was so in the habit of chasing flies off it in the summer, that he forgot those insects did not exist in winter, and in imagination was perpetually dispersing them.

His nose was very red, and of a decided celestial tendency.

He approached Mrs. Cuffins with a leer on his fat lips.

"Dear me, mum, all alone, that isn't as it ought to be."

The widow bridled a little.

"Sure it's what a lone woman must expect, Mr.

Honeyman, we can't always be running out like you gents."

Mr. Honeyman looked at the teapot; his eyes also interviewed the bread and butter; his mouth watered at the sight of the "whelks."

"Will ye take a cup? Now just do, Mr. Honeyman, if ye be you're in too great a hurry."

First he couldn't think of it; then he took a look at the cake and said he was afraid he must go.

He stared at the shrimps, and thought he'd stay just a minute, his little eyes came easily to the "whelks," and then he sat down, took off his hat, tucked up the cuffs of his Sunday coat and prepared for work, i.e., eating.

"Is your tea as you like it, Mr. Honeyman?" simpered the widow, after handing him a cup.

"Prime, mum, prime," smacking his lips with great gusto. "I'd never wish for better."

"Try some more whelks," she murmured.

She helped him to another plateful of those delicacies.

He grinned and smiled, but evidently some trifle was wanting to make his enjoyment quite complete.

"What is it?" asked the widow; "ain't the butter good?"

"Bootiful," He advanced his fat face quite close to his hostess, and said in a mysterious whisper, "Have ye a pin?"

Mrs. Cuffins had a pin; and forthwith produced it from some hidden fold of her dress.

Mr. Honeyman took it eagerly, and picked away at his "whelks" with renewed vigour and keener pleasure.

She sat and watched him closely, making a minute calculation of the half pints of "whelks" and plates of bread and butter he had consumed at her expense, all provided to further her great design of becoming Mrs. Honeyman, and exchanging the gloomy little shop for the tiny little grocery business in the High Street.

It seemed to her that he was remarkably slow in coming to the point, perhaps it was nervousness that impeded his progress, if so, it certainly behaved her to give him a little gentle encouragement. How very dreadful, if nothing ever came of it, if she remained Sarah Cuffins and had expended all that wealth of tea and "whelks" in vain.

"Life is short," she remarked, demurely, when Mr. Honeyman had haunched her his cup for the third time. "Them as wants to be happy don't ought to waste no time in thinking about it."

Now what could have been more tender, more encouraging, than this gentle hint?

Mr. Honeyman looked at Mrs. Cuffins and ogled, she looked at him and ogled back.

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed the grocer.

"Ha, ha, ha," echoed the widow, not knowing what she was laughing at.

"And axing ye pardon, mum, but you do look charming this afternoon, as blooming as a pot o' treacle."

He reached out his large hand, in which yet lingered some traces of "whelks," Mrs. Cuffins placed her plump one in its grasp, he squeezed it gently; it was a moment of overwhelming triumph for the widow.

Mr. Honeyman's fat lips were open, he was just about to speak, when a furious knocking commenced, and through the glass doors Mrs. Cuffins saw a customer in the very act of making an impatient retreat; intent on monetary matters, she rushed out after them, and Mr. Honeyman's sentence remained unspoken.

When she was gone Mr. Honeyman cautiously shut the door leading into the shop, and after peeping to be quite sure Mrs. Cuffins wasn't looking, opened another which led to the kitchen, into this domestic spot he intruded his burly form, and called aloud:

"Bella, Bella."

No answer came. He called again, "Bella, aren't you coming? I can't wait much longer."

Finding that no reply was obtainable, he trotted back to the parlour, devoured half-a-dozen whelks and the last remaining slice of bread and butter before Mrs. Cuffins could escape from her fastidious customer, a young woman of fifty-two, who wished to purchase a bonnet in which quantity and quality should be combined at the modest cost of two and elevenpence.

This modest damsel, after turning over Mrs. Cuffins' whole stock, and trying on at least half of them, came to the conclusion that there was not one to suit her, and quitted the shop, leaving the widow literally boiling over with indignation.

"The bussy! to keep a tarning 'em over and never buy one after all. It's my belief she came in just to get a look at the fashions, and never meant to spend a ha'penny after all."

"Ugly thing," sympathised Mr. Honeyman.

"Yes, she just was. I don't think the women are much to look at about here, any o' 'em."
 "I know one who is," said the grocer, gallantly.
 "Dear me! Who is it? Pray tell me if it ain't a secret!"

"Mrs. Cuffins, can't you guess?"
 "Sure, Mr. Honeyman, I never guessed nothing in all my life. I should be afraid to try!"
 "And yet you know her."

"Do I, now?"
 "Yes," with a low chuckle, "ye sees her every day; ye sees her now," with another chuckle; "it's yourself, mum, yourself, mum. Where'd ye find another woman to hold a candle to you?"

The widow tried to blush, but only succeeded in looking pleased.

"Lor, Mr. Honeyman; bet then you gents say anything. You're surely a laughing at me?"

"May sugar go up tuppence in the pound, if—"
 His protestations were out short, for another knock proclaimed the arrival of a fresh customer.

Mrs. Cuffins tore herself away from his society, and finding it was half-past seven, he put on his hat, turned down his cuffs, and took his leave.

When Bella Grey returned not ten minutes afterwards she found her employer in a highly amiable condition.

Not only did Mrs. Cuffins let her off with a slight scolding, but she actually gave her the few shrimps Mr. Honeyman had spared from the mighty ravages of his appetite to take home for her supper.

After such unparalleled generosity it is surprising that Mrs. Cuffins was not immediately transplanted to a better world, but she lingered on awhile, a shining light in the midst of the dark selfishness around her.

Duke Rivington waited eagerly for the promised interview which Bella had appointed for the following Sunday.

Often did Percy Harcourt rally him on his silence and abstraction.

Very mystified was he when immediately after luncheon, Duke started off on a solitary expedition, after having cautiously but resolutely refused his offered companionship.

Now this same Sunday Mother Naggs was ill, and she had persuaded Bella to keep her company. She had a strange fancy for the girl; her broken down, submissive husband liked to see the dark-eyed damsel.

Her son came when he thought he should meet her, but besides this, Mother Naggs loved Bella as she loved nothing else.

She reminded her of a time when she was as young and innocent herself, and she liked to have her with her.

After dinner—I won't discuss the meal as it was neither elegant nor substantial—Bella started on her walk, and much to the chagrin of Bill, declined his escort; not to be outdone the jealous swain set out a few minutes later, and followed her as closely as possible without exciting her attention.

Straight on she walked at a rapid pace, until the eastern suburb was left far behind, and she approached a public park, a park which though little known to, and little admired by fashionable eyes, is yet the innocent joy of thousands of the London poor.

Bill entered it too with a vague jealous fear at his heart, and a great uneasiness he could not check.

The girl went forward as one well accustomed to the place.

She looked thoughtfully to the right and to the left, as though expecting to meet some one. Apparently they were not there, she ceased her walk, and despite the coldness of the December day, took a seat on one of the benches near the gate.

A great foreboding of ill came to Bill, and it did not lessen as he saw a man approach and seat himself at her side.

(To be continued.)

LAPSED LOVES.

MAN lives for himself. So long as he succeeds in successfully surmounting the billows of life, he looks with calmness upon those whom the waters threaten to overwhelm. He hears without emotion that the friend of his youth has gone to the bad, while he scarcely stops his business to heave a sigh when he is told that a whilom and dear companion has hied to that bourne from which no traveller returns. So engrossed is he, indeed, in his own acts and personality that as the years fly by he absolutely forgets those whose tender hands succoured him and whose loving hearts beat largely for him in the past. He remem-

bers his father but as a shadow which for a little while was entwined with his, while his thoughts of the dead mother or the dead wife takes an indistinct form.

The probability is that if he could live for an indefinite period the past would gradually become buried in oblivion. If a being or thing cannot affect him materially in any way there are small chances that he will bear it in recollection for any lengthened period, however much his imagination may at one time have been excited by it. The ordinary human mind seems incapable of holding and retaining more than a certain number of images, so if new ones are thrust upon it old ones must be placed in solitary chambers, and finally be lost sight of altogether.

Existence in the nineteenth century being full of excitement, and the man who wishes to keep well abreast of the times having to give almost his whole attention to them, and human nature being what it is, it is but natural that the present is an age of forgetting, an age of friendships and lapsed loves.

THE DRAMA.

THE ALEXANDRA PALACE.

SINCE our last notice, this popular resort has fully earned the high meed of patronage it has received from all classes by the varied entertainments its energetic and spirited management have carried out.

"Our Boys," presented by the original Vaudeville Theatre Company, who have sustained the fun of Mr. Byron's admirable comedy for 500 nights before London audiences, evoked from the visitors of the Theatre on the top of Muswell Hill irrepressible laughter.

Never were Mr. David James and Mr. W. Farren in better form as Parkyn Middlewick and Sir Thomas Chumpneys, the fathers of "Our Boys."

The performance of "Rip Van Winkle" by the great American actor, Mr. Jefferson, was, in another line, an approved success.

"Hamlet," with Mr. William Creswick as the Prince, supported by Mr. Henry Marston, and Lionel Brough as the first gravedigger, was a higher flight.

Mr. J. F. Toole as Professor Muddle, and Miss E. Farren as Mary Ann in the "Spelling Bee," and the former in "Tottles," gave the visitors the very best specimens of the "screaming farce" which carries London with it at the present day.

Tom Taylor's effective drama, "The Ticket of Leave Man," "Still Waters run Deep," with that wondrous artiste Mrs. Stirling, and the gorgeous Easter piece, "Turco the Terrible," with its "Princess Show," have also occupied the Theatre.

Turning from the drama to musical entertainments we have had in addition to two grand concerts, Italian operas, Travatore, Marta, etc., by the Paropa Rosa and the Royal Italian Opera Companies; "Madame Larchiduc," with Emily Soldens; Mrs. Howard Paul's entertainment, and greatest attraction of all in this department, three English "Ballad" Operas, supported by the prince of European tenors, Sims Reeves, and by the artistic American basso, Signor Foli, who, to the delight of the musical public, appears to have naturalised himself among us. On the 20th "Guy Mannering," on her Majesty's Birthday, "The Beggar's Opera," with Mr. Wiford Morgan as Captain Macnab, and on Saturday, June 3, "The Waterman," with the last act of "Lucia di Lammermoor," have been performed. These are a few of the dramatic and musical treats which the public have enjoyed at the Alexandra.

Of outdoor sports the Alexandra Park races, on the 12th and 13th, the Pony races on the 23rd, the Bicycle races (professional), Balloon ascents and grand displays of fireworks, have attracted their tens of thousands. Brockmann's matchless troupe of trained animals in the circus have delighted all ages by their marvellous docility, intelligence, and, we had almost added, comedy—for the monkeys who dine and wait at table, and steal wine and sweets, like some of our human servants, do all but talk.

Of course May has had its flower shows of splendour, perfume, and beauty, and June is following with its displays of unrivalled roses. Whit Monday counted upwards of seventy thousand visitors, and the fireworks on the Thursday were splendid. Though we have not yet exhausted the catalogue of what is to be seen, heard, and enjoyed at the People's Palace on the northern heights of London, we must here pause, and with a *mena*, that races are fixed for two days on the 9th and 10th of June, and trotting matches for the 12th, and that the dining and refreshment departments, under the experienced and well-approved superintendence of Messrs. Bertram and Roberts, are in full working order, and unsurpassed in every detail of economy, profusion, and excellence, we must for a short time bid farewell to the Alexandra Palace and Park.

"The Corsican Brothers" is in preparation for revival at the Olympic Theatre.

Mr. JOHN C. BUCKSTONE, a younger son of Mr. Buckstone of the Haymarket Theatre, has made a successful first appearance with the Chippendale Company at the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin, and is now playing at the Amphitheatre, Liverpool.

Mr. IRVING is going through some of his old plays at the Lyceum, and later on proposes to produce "The Belle's Stratagem"—a play almost unknown to the present generation of theatre-goers, and less famous than "The Beau's Stratagem," but a strong play nevertheless, and noteworthy because it shows that Mr. Irving has deserted tragedy for comedy.

Mr. AND MRS. GERMAN REED have in preparation an entertainment from the pen of Mr. Gilbert, styled "The Wicked Duke."

Mr. J. L. TOOLE will return to the Gaiety for twelve nights at the end of July.

FIRESIDES THAT OUR DAUGHTERS LEAVE.

The sun shines brightly overhead,
 The dillies gleam, the sweet birds sing;
 The morrow cannot be to-day,
 Nor winter seem like budding spring;
 The lingering breath of orange-blossoms,
 The rooms in festival array,
 Are but mute tokens to my soul
 Of one who left my house to-day.

I called her baby once; she lay
 A helpless burden in Love's arms;
 I curled the rings of shining gold,
 And watching the swift-unfolding charms;
 I sang her lullabies each eve,
 I tucked her up, with kiss on kiss,
 And thought the world could never hold
 For me a purer, sweeter bliss.

And then a dimpled lassie sat,
 Morn, noon and night, beside my knee.
 The babe was precious, and the child
 Seemed just as sweet and dear to me:
 For her I rifled Summer's wealth,
 Robbed Winter of its hoarded store,
 And told the old, enchanted tales,
 The fairies' lore couched o'er and o'er.

Anon a quiet school-girl came,
 And books and study filled the years,
 Nor stole one tithe of all the love
 That blinded me with jealous fears;
 Her mind unfolded day by day,
 Till, all too soon, a maiden stood
 Upon that shore where childhood's grace
 Is merged in glorious womanhood.

An orange-wreath now crowns her brow,
 Love's golden pledge is on her hand,
 And, just as in the olden time,
 With folded hands, alone I stand!
 A shadow dims the dear old place—
 There's something gone for which I
 grieve;

Nor bloom, nor song, nor sun can light
 The firesides that our daughters leave!

No more we see them, day by day;
 No more we wait Love's good-night kiss;
 But wander through the silent rooms,
 And mourn the years of vanished bliss!
 Just as we loved, our daughters love;
 Yet, still, our lonely spirits grieve;
 For farther off from Heaven seem
 The firesides that our daughters leave!

L. S. N.

THE FUTURE.—Who rests content with the present? None. We have all deep within us a craving for the future. In childhood we anticipate youth; in youth, manhood; in manhood, old age; and to what does that turn but to a world beyond our own? From the very first, the strong belief is nursed within us: we look forward and forward, till that which was desire grows faith. The to come is the universal heritage of mankind; and he claims but a small part of his portion who looks not beyond the grave.

We cannot conquer fate and necessity, yet we can yield to them in such a manner as to be greater than if we could.

DECEIT.—Some people continue under such gross and habitual self-deception that the most blundering observer of human nature can understand them better than they can themselves. There are persons who have so accustomed themselves to all the arts and tricks of falsehood that to gain a plain end in a plain way would be to them as tasteless and insipid as warm water.



VINCENT LUTTREL;

OR, FRIENDSHIP BETRAYED.

By the Author of "Fighting for Freedom," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXII.

"A STRANGE fellow, that," said Jasper Dorrington; "seems to know you, Luttrell; most likely a sponge squeezed dry in London who hopes to imbibe a little moisture by fixing himself upon you in Paris?"

"He will find that I am an ugly rocher for any Monsieur Laroche to fix upon in the hope of blood-sucking," laughed Luttrell. "However, if he is really an acquaintance I will not entirely turn my back upon a countryman in distress. Yet I shall leave him to find me out without any assistance from myself. There are so many Englishmen in Paris whom one would rather not know that I shall reckon this Monsieur Laroche among the number until I know more of him."

Jasper and Luttrell then left the dirty salon-a-jeu, and, after threading a maze of dirty streets by the light of the street-lanterns suspended midway, emerged upon the Rue de Rivoli and, reaching their hotel, retired for the night.

Jasper slept soundly after the fatigues of a long day's pursuit of pleasure.

Not so Vincent Luttrell. Despite repeated attempts to woo slumber he lay awake, tormented by a feverish insomnia, in which the ever-present features of the leering, red-faced croupier obtruded themselves upon him whether he closed his eyes or stared into the shadowy obscurity of his chamber, whose darkness was rendered visible by a flickering night-light.

Thus was he tormented till after break of day, and at the time he had proposed to arise he fell into his first sleep.

The sun was high in the heavens when Jasper Dorrington entered his apartment and bade him good morning.

Luttrell awoke from an unrefreshing sleep; some indistinct presentiment, which he made an effort to defy, hung heavily on him.

"Your friend of last night, Monsieur Laroche, has kept his promise of an early visit," remarked Jasper. "He has been in the visitors' room this half hour."

CAPTAIN FITZGERALD.

He seems to be well known as a 'hail fellow well met' with both the French gargons and German kellerer."

"The diable with Monsieur Laroche," said Luttrell, with assumed gaiety. "A red-nosed spectre has haunted me all night. If I can find a reasonable excuse I'll revenge myself by laying hold of his proboscis, as St. Dunstan did that of his Satanic Majesty, only I lack the red-hot tongs which assisted his saintship's gripe of Old Nick's nasal organ. Let the waiter tell Monsieur Laroche that Mr. Luttrell will do himself the pleasure of seeing him so soon as he is dressed."

Vincent Luttrell was soon in slippers and dressing-gown, and descended to his breakfast-room.

The stranger was ushered in; and there for the present we will leave them.

"Fears of the brave and follies of the wise" have been the theme of all who have written the lives of heroes and philosophers. Bravery that is mere brute courage is but a low endowment, and Rochefoucauld has told us the humiliating truth, 'qui vit sans folie ne s'est pas si sage qu'il croit'; "in other words, "there is no wise man who is not partly a fool." Vincent Luttrell in his selfishness, his cynicism, his infidelity, and his utter disbelief in the honesty of man or the virtue of woman, had very nearly reached the standard of perfection set up by the French philosophers and the esprits forts of the early revolution and latest Commune; yet he felt an indefinable and uncontrollable repugnance to meeting the shabby, red-nosed, impudent croupier of the "copper hell," and so strongly did this prepossession work upon him that had he dared to run away from the dilemma in which he was placed he would have gladly done so.

He was angry with himself, he knew not why, for surely he did not fear this contemptible unknown?

Yet he placed his hand on the lock of the door of the breakfast-room with something very like trepidation.

There he beheld his seedy acquaintance of the overnight, his back turned towards him, looking out of the window into the street below.

The man turned slowly upon hearing Luttrell enter, bowed with a sinister and provokingly patronising smile, handed a chair to Luttrell, who simply took it from him by the back, and remained standing.

The stranger seated himself, and Luttrell seemed to await his speaking, undecided whether to eject him

summarily as an impertinent intruder, or to assist him as a countryman in distress, should his case prove one for relief.

Vincent Luttrell felt anything but bold as the glittering, cold, steel-grey eyes of the old man, who however, seemed rather old by dissipation than by years, were fixed searchingly upon him.

"It is some years since we met, Mr. Luttrell," said the stranger, "years enough to make a hole in the best part of a middle-aged man's life. Yet the occurrences which marked our meeting, I should think, can hardly have parted from the memory of one who took so active a part in them?"

Luttrell looked at him as if he did not comprehend his meaning, or recognise his person.

"Yes, Mr. Luttrell," continued he with a spiteful sneer, "it may or may not suit you to remember our 'Adventures of a Night,' as it did not suit me at that time to remember them myself, but I can tell you that for some time after my violent death!" and the fellow laid a peculiar accent on the last two words, "I searched narrowly the English newspapers to see if that jealous and furious cornet whom you wounded on that fatal occasion had succeeded in getting a divorce from his pretty flirt of a wife, and damages in a case of Denton against Luttrell which I thought more than probable would be instituted."

As he spoke thus Vincent Luttrell looked fixedly at the bright gray eyes, which seemed to fix him with the fascination of a basilisk, but he spoke not.

"You don't mean to pretend you have forgotten that moonlight night, and the cliffs, and the struggle, and the chance-shot, and the cold sea-bath which you so kindly assisted me to, by which my life was so remarkably saved?"

"You are talking in riddles, my friend," said Luttrell, uneasily.

"Oh, you require me to be more explicit, do you?" said the man; "well, I will be. The splash into the water—for there was some twenty feet of a running tide coming into the bay round the headland from which one or other, or both of you, tossed me—was seen by a small fishing-sloop holding off the coast, in the shadow of the tall rocks; for the little craft had on board sundry kags of Schiedam which they were just after getting out of a cave in the face of the cliff at high water, and meant to 'run' that very night a little distance off on a practicable beach. The fellows, you may guess, were astonished at my flying leap, as they thought it, and putting out their sweeps, they were soon across me as I floated along, and in one minute, as they afterwards told me,

I was on the deck of 'La Petite Poulet,' as was as a swab, and as mute as a stockfish. The contrabands, as our continentals call them, were humane fellows, so they poured cognac down my throat, and as soon as they found I was bleeding from the neck and ear, they washed my wound with the same pordial styptic, and bound it up in shipshape fashion. As, however, they were not desirous of any but the most distant acquaintance with the English coastguard, they ended their kegs with the utmost speed on the English shore, and carried me off on their return voyage to St. Malo's, where I recovered in the hospital for shipwrecked seamen."

Luttrell had by this time recovered an artificial composure, and looked with well-feigned astonishment at the speaker.

"Ventrebien!" muttered the fellow, and getting angry at Vincent's silence; are you going to deny your identity, Mr. Luttrell, and the obligation you are under to me for my forbearance in not taking criminal proceedings which might have ended in the hanging, or at any rate the imprisonment, of yourself and the passionate gentleman whose purse-strings his pretty wife had drawn so freely in her partiality to me—yes, for me, Captain Percy O'Gorman Fitzgerald, of the Venetian Hussars. Just think what a course of proceeding I might have taken had it not been inconvenient to me at that time to present myself as a public prosecutor, and what a figure you and your friend would have cut before twelve honest men in a jury-box!"

"I can only say that you are, without exception, the most audacious impostor that it has been my misfortune to encounter in my whole life," said Vincent Luttrell, indignantly. "I know no Captain Fitzgerald, except one who still lives, at least he did so a few weeks since in St. James's street, and who is a member of the Rag and Farnish. I think that gentleman had an adventure some years since about a lady, long dead, in which a friend of mine, Mr. Denton, also dead, was concerned; but that you should dare to personate that Captain Fitzgerald, for what purpose I can hardly conceive, is so confoundedly impudent that I shall feel myself quite justified in handing you over to the Parisian police as an impostor who seeks to extort money by trumping up an unfounded criminal charge against two gentlemen of position and wealth, one of whom, as I tell you, has gone to the grave without even the knowledge of this abominable accusation."

It was now the turn of the swindling gambler to be astonished, and astonished he certainly was.

We have said that Captain Fitzgerald was a big Irishman, but he was a bully and a coward at heart, and he felt that if Luttrell should resort to violence that he would find him his master. His fear, too, of any intimate relations with the Paris police was something beyond the dread of a canary for a cat—the very sight of a sergeant de ville, though they were as plentiful as green-flies in summer, gave him a "turn."

His courage, like Bob Acres, "seemed to ooze out at his fingers' ends," and his insolent tone was subdued to almost fawning expostulation.

Vincent Luttrell had crossed swords with him in the encounter of resolve and audacity, and had triumphed. The bully succumbed, dropped his point, and cried "quarter!"

"Morbien! that would be an ungrateful return! Give me into custody of the infernal police of this city because I did not make what they call a 'reclamation' for my ill-usage and give you into the custody of yours. You must be jesting, Mither Luttrell. After all these years we have known each other, too, I have surely some claim on your consideration, as a countryman whom fortune has used unkindly. I have no desire to open old sores, I assure you! I'm of a forgiving disposition, as you see, and as that raging cuckold has settled all scores in this world, why I view your past in that unlucky affair as only what I'd be after doing myself if any friend of mine asked me to get him out of a difficulty in the matter of fighting. So we'll let that fly stick to the wall, Mither Luttrell, with your permission, and trate bygones as bygones."

"Though I confess your story has interested and surprised me," said Luttrell, forcing a smile, "I must request, if you value my assistance, that you will be so good as not to amuse your acquaintance by its relation in connection with the names of Vincent Luttrell or my departed friend, Mr. Denton. If you do so and I hear of it, perchance a little biographical sketch of your antecedents, in which you may depend I shall not gloss over your proceedings on the other side of the Channel, shall be furnished to the chief bureau of police, where they take great care of such little memoirs and produce them at very inconvenient times. You understand me?"

"Perfectly. But I don't believe, Mither Luttrell, that it's in you to trample intirely on a poor divil that's already down in the scale of jiltality since

we used to meet at Crockford's and Eph. Bond's, in the ring, or at Leamington, Cheltenham or Scarborough in the sayson. Blar an' 'ounds, Mither Luttrell, you can't mane to say," said Fitzgerald, warming into his natural manner, "that you'll pache on a poor divil about a few mistakes that he's paid the pinalty for in a twenty years' transportation, which is more than the judges 'nd give him forright-down robbery or manslaughter."

"I did not say I would, unless you first break the agreement I propose to you, which is that you never, unless I make the advance, recognise me, or call me by name in any public place, or name me, as I said before, in any story in your past life, about which, I should think, your own prudence would keep you silent. As I perceive," added he, glancing at Fitzgerald's white-seamed and braided military frock, which loaded with frags and braid was carefully fastened inside the collar up to his very skin to conceal the absence of laces, "that you are not in full credit with your schooler, I will give you a fifty franc note as an earnest; and, as a first experiment, I will at once introduce you to the generous young Englishman you saw with me last night. He will be sure to second my good intentions towards you, and as he is aware of your visit, it will be as well that he should be a participator in the task of assisting a deserving fellow countryman."

The bitter irony of Luttrell's tone as he uttered the words would have stung any sensitive person, but Fitzgerald was so degraded by a life of cheating, mendacity, and mendacity, that he merely laughed at the satire as a joke, and looked with satisfaction at the prospect of "a handsome compliment from Mither Luttrell's friend."

Vincent Luttrell rang the bell.

"Tell Mr. Dorrington that I shall be glad of his company if he is at leisure."

The waiter retired, and Jasper shortly came in. Fitzgerald saluted him with a low bow as he entered.

"Jasper, mon ami," said Vincent Luttrell, "there's the man we saw last night at the St. Landry. Like many of his countrymen, for he hails from Ireland, he has run through his paternal acres, if his father hadn't done so before him, sold his commission, paid some of his debts with the money and spent the rest and a good deal more. For the balance of his liabilities he has given leg-bail, and now I think I have said all I need to introduce Captain Fitzgerald, whom I must take the credit of saying I recognised as something more than the common run of crocheters in 'copper hells.'"

"By my troth, and that's a mighty facyious way of telling a sad story, and though I say it that shouldn't, it's mighty like the truth of the matter. For my father, rest his soul, kept the old castle against the bailiffs for many a year, until at last one of the process-carvers got in as a parasite and popped the execution into his hand."

"Served at last," said the dying man, and off he went, to heaven, I hope. "That was how he paid the debt of nature, which some rascally joker said was the only debt he did pay, and left me heir to Castle Rackrent, the old ancient family sate, nine foreclosed cottages, and a lieutenant's commission in a marching regiment."

Jasper Dorrington laughed heartily at this characteristic speech, as he thought, and Vincent Luttrell, taking up the cue, continued:

"Very good, Captain, very good; but I did not listen to your story to make a jest of a man's misfortunes, and I can only regret that my means do not permit me to do more for a countryman meeting strangers in a foreign land. Accept this note," and he drew forth one for a hundred francs, without alluding to the former of fifty, "and I hope that some of your richer countrymen will increase the gift."

"Permit me, without offence, to double it," said Jasper, taking out a note for five hundred francs, and slipping it into the gratified grasp of the copper captain.

"You overwhelm me, gentlemen, with your generosity," said Fitzgerald, bowing. "Need I say, gentlemen, that I shall be most happy to see you at the rue St. Landry; and should you at any time desire a guide in explaining 'Les mystères de Paris,' and there are more of them, as I can assure you, than even Eugène Sue describes, you can always command the humble services of Captain O'Gorman Fitzgerald."

So saying the adventurer took his departure.

"Strange fellow, that," said Vincent; "there are scores like him about, Jasper, some of them worse, some better, but none of them to be trusted. Look in at the rue St. Landry, ha! ha! what a kind invitation. 'Will you walk into my parlour, said the spider to the fly; 'tis the prettiest little parlour ever you did spy,' and Vincent Luttrell hummed in

a musical tone the first verse of a then popular ballad. "The gratified rascal, friend Jasper, you see would pluck benefactor or stranger with perfect impartiality. 'Tis all fish that comes to net' with these fishers of men, and Captain Fitzgerald, I suppose, is merely pursuing son metier when he asks his charitable patrons to supplement their donations by putting on red or black at his 'little go;' but we will not avail ourselves of his invite to share the hospitalities of the rue St. Landry. Have you ordered the calèche, Jasper? I propose to take a turn in the Bois de Boulogne, where we may hope about three to see the handsomest and the best-dressed sovereign lady in Europe, and the longest headed parvenu whose star has led him to the throne of his uncle, which he may keep until the said star tumbles from its meridian by some sudden revolution of the wheel of fortune, or fate, or whatever deity rules the rapid changes of the most gay and feeble people of the most narrowly and changeful city of the civilized world."

"Why, Vincent, you've taken a political prophecy—a dangerous thing in this place and these times."

"Right, it is dangerous, for despots always fear prophets."

Straps made his appearance at this moment, and announced the carriage.

We must beg Mr. Straps' pardon for our omission to mention that that important personage, promoted to the rank of "gentleman's gentleman," or valet out of livery, accompanied his master, Jasper Dorrington, on his accidental trip.

Mr. Straps, like the monkey who had seen the world, was much improved in manner and polish by foreign travel.

He was a shrewd, apt and intelligent servant before, now he was his master's confidant, and not unfrequently his guide and humble adviser; and as he was perfectly devoted and trustworthy, he was valuable in many ways and on many occasions.

We have seen that Mr. Straps had himself also a good adviser and a white-sergeant at home at Clover-nook, and by frequent letters between the plighted pair, Mr. Straps kept Martha Miller au courant of the doings of the travellers and of himself, while Martha kept Mr. Straps posted up in the gossip and occurrences of Clovernook and its denizens.

As Mr. Straps will play a part hereafter in the doings of the two gentlemen, his master and Mr. Luttrell, we have here recorded the fact of his presence in Paris, and farther that Mr. Straps by no means entertained so good an opinion of Mr. Luttrell as his master, Jasper Dorrington. On the contrary, he strongly suspected his master's friend to be anything but a honest gentleman, and he watched him for proofs of the correctness of his suspicions.

The friends were soon in the splendid drive of the Bois, where, amid the magnificent equipages of the rich and the noble from every part of the world, the English horses and carriages of the Emperor and the Empress Eugénie were the admiration of all beholders.

Vincent and his friend received, as the Imperial ruler of France perceived their nationality at a glance, a most gracious salute from the saturnine ruler, and a sweet and smiling acknowledgment of their uncovered obeisance from that fair and august lady, then in the pride of her beauty and high rank, and now the widowed and dethroned mother of a young cadet in the Royal Artillery of England, and herself the mourning and resigned occupant of a private country gentleman's abode at Chislehurst."

That evening, after a grand hall given by the Prefect of the Seine, Baron Haussmann, at the Hotel de Ville, Vincent Luttrell sat in his chamber. He was in a meditative mood, and, having partially undressed, had donned a cashmere dressing-gown, and getting out his travelling-desk and writing materials, had seated himself, for the day had already dawned, at a table.

"This fellow must be got rid of, that's the only way to make him safe. Yes, got rid of—but how? I wish I could, as Falstaff says, 'poison him in a pot of ale,' or 'put ratsbane in his porridge.' This resurrection of a rascal is certainly perplexing—very perplexing—especially considering the use I've been making of his supposed death. How to make it a real one is now the question. The scoundrel is such a wail that he wouldn't be either missed or inquired after, that's in favour of his removal, but then, as a comic fellow says in an absurd play, 'there never was a murder without a body,' and somehow or other that precious body will turn up, and somehow the body must be accounted for. There's a body—who did it belong to, and how came it to be a body? And then there's a bother."

"I am quite of that gentleman's opinion, that murder's a clumsy expedient—but then its efficacious as far as regards direct evidence, as 'dead men tell no tales.' In what an inexplicable circle do events move! Here am I, after twenty years' of

Practising on the fears of a pusillanimous dupe, myself in the blue position as my victim. But I shall not, like Hugh Denton, toll and sweat and fardels bear, when I can make somebody's 'quietus' with a bare bolton, not so. This set Fitzgerald must be made safe somehow! The how is not yet quite fashioned in the anvil of my brain, but it soon shall be, ere the iron cool. Vincent Luttrell, your star is not to be quenched or its path obscured by such an adverse influence as this muddled, elated-headed and brandy-steeped outcast can exercise. Captain Fitzgerald, your silence is necessary to my peace of mind and security, and silence you shall be at once and for ever."

Vincent Luttrell, at a few moments in thought, then hastily scribbled two short notes and a long and laboured letter for England.

The two short notes he placed in his breast-pocket of his day-coat; to the longer letter he affixed a triple stamp, two for France and one for England, and then, laying himself down outside the bedclothes, soon fell asleep, thoroughly fatigued with more than twenty hours of active pleasure and business.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"Luttrell," said Jasper, on entering the breakfast-room at noon, "I'm afraid that I must make my tour less extensive and of shorter duration than I originally contemplated. My father writes that he would wish me to be in England by the first week of next month, and here's the 17th. I've a strong suspicion that there's something matrimonial in the wind. Did I ever mention to you an old Yorkshire family of the name of Pomfret? Sir Piers Pomfret is the head of it. One of his sons, Lionel, once did me the favour of leaving me not very valuable life, at least, as the advertisement for lost property says, 'of no value to anybody but the owner.' The affair happened here, in Paris, a very few years ago, and when I introduced Lionel to my sister Alice, then only a school-girl, she took such a childish liking to young Lionel that I believe she has ever since made him her standard of comparison with all the brave knights and handsome princes she has read about in story-books. Of course now she's grown into a woman and would laugh at all that sort of thing, but so it was, and every vacation when she came home, and every time that I or the governor went to London or Yorkshire, we were expected to be able to report something about Mr. Lionel Pomfret, on pain of disappointing Miss Alice Dorrington. At last I quizzed her about her lover; she became conscious of an impropriety, dropped the inquiries, and blushed or was offended if I joked about him. Then I saw how it was. Well, I am sure the governor respects Sir Piers, and I know he likes young Lionel, so what can be more natural than that there should be a match sur le tapis between young Pomfret and my pretty sister?"

Vincent Luttrell wished Lionel Pomfret and sister Alice at the bottom of the Red Sea.

"We have yet a fortnight in hand, Jasper," replied he; "as I don't see that we need very much shorten our run. Monaco we may resign, but a trip to Hamburg could be compassed, and I have it on my programme to punt a little there, and stake a few Napoleons against the bank of his table-keeping, roya, and serene highness. He does business on rather more favourable terms with his customers than some other small sovereigns, who derive their incomes from bottling and selling aqueous mineral waters, and picking the pockets of foreign visitors to their little-gown dominions. We can do Hamburg and be back in England by the 9th or 10th, at latest."

"Agreed!" said Jasper Dorrington, for he was unconsciously dominated by the stouter will, "agreed. By-the-by, I shall leave my man, Straps, behind here in Paris, in charge of my impediments—that I believe is the 'foreign correspondents' word for luggage—and keep on my rooms here till our return. I don't want him on this trip, at any rate. We will set out to-morrow, Luttrell."

Vincent Luttrell did not quite relish this sudden departure.

He had, as we have seen, an 'iron in the fire,' in respect to the inconvenient and inopportune re-annatation of the twice-slain Captain Fitzgerald.

That personage appeared to be secured, unlike many others, both from a dry death and a wet one. Vincent Luttrell did not feel satisfied that Fitzgerald, though not born to be drowned, would be hanged, according to the proverb.

On the contrary, he was just now revolving in his mind how to make sure of that gentleman by anti-cipating Mr. Calcraft and his then "new drop."

There was, however, no help for it, unless he risked the immediate parting with his companion de voyage, which he was by no means prepared to do.

Such an opportunity of plucking a pigeon unsuspectingly might not recur, and he might lose the

bird in hand without ever getting the two in the bush.

So he determined that, will-be-will-do, the "affair Fitzgerald," as a Frenchman would call it, must be laid on the shelf, to be taken down at the first favourable opportunity.

The next day the "friends" left Paris, and the apartment being engaged for a fortnight, the keys were left with the concierge, and Mr. Straps became a gentleman at large, with a liberal board-wages allowance and a nightly lodging in the hotel.

It was natural that Mr. Straps should, as a garçon d'esprit, resolve to see life after the fashion of his masters and "betters," so he habited himself every evening en costume de dail, concealed by a military cloak, danced at La Salle St. Cecille and La Mabilly, to the music of Musard, flirted with grisettes and lovettes at the Jardin d'Hyver and Le Chateau des Fleurs, promenaded at the Sunday balls at the Porte St. Martin, and was a "milor Anglais" at the Casino d'Asnières.

At these places Mr. Straps, as milor Estrapes, made appointments (never kept) with numerous ladies of rank—a class numerous in Paris, and remarkable for the liberality with which they distribute their cards to casual acquaintances.

As we like to be precise in these matters, lest we should be suspected of slander, we may mention that Mr. Straps, having the vanity to preserve some of these pasteboard souvenirs of suppers and petites verres, for which he had paid pretty smartly, the same fell into the hands of Martha Miller, at an after period, in an old portemonnaie.

It was lucky for Mr. Straps that they fell into our hands; otherwise an explanation might have enlightened Mrs. Straps in a manner not quite agreeable to that gentleman.

The addresses of these cards were most of them—"rue Bréot," "rue Taitbout," "rue Neuve des Mathurins," or "rue Richer," while the names of the "ladies of rank," as Mr. Straps among his intimates always maintained them to be—were Rigolboche, Cora l'Esquille (she dealt in oysters), Le Baron de Biarritz, Madame Eugénie Zou-Zou, and La Marquise de Bellesdents—names certainly not to be found in the French peerage.

Among other recreations of Mr. Straps, was a look-in at the rue St. Landry, for neither the saucy nor the argentine pandemonium suited his purse, and here it was his fortune to recognise, in the person of the very-nosed croupier, the visitor of Vincent Luttrell and his master at their hotel on the morning preceding their departure from Paris.

Mr. Straps rightly conjectured that this was an acquaintance he was bound to cultivate, as he held it to be one of the duties of a servant who desired to be of use to his master, to know as much of his secrets and those of his friends as he could possibly make himself master of.

On entering the dingy salon de jeu, on the night, or rather morning in question, the "business" was slack, four or five steady individuals, mere "bonnets" of the establishment, were performing a very lugubrious task of "keeping the ball rolling" by putting down lent-money against the "player"; winning or losing as might serve to "draw" the onlooker to stake.

Mr. Straps, rather warm with wine, and in high spirits at his "successes" with an incognito who had designtly betrayed her own secret at the masked ball at La Cluserie de Lillas, put down a small handful of bronze coin on "red," and the croupier, after the "decision of the die," crying "Bouge gagne!" raked up the "dirty money," and taking "the bank rate" out of the heap, pushed the rest over to the delighted Mr. Straps with a smiling "a vous milor," which quite won the admiration of that vinolent personage, who incontinently put down the whole with the addition of a piece of silver on the red.

Of course this time the lack of "black" was in the ascendant, and "Noir gagne" sent Mr. Straps' coin into the pockets of somebody else.

Mr. Straps twice more "attacked his colours" and won once, changed it, and lost twice, and so "the doctrine of chances" being vindicated to Mr. Straps' loss and dissatisfaction—which, however, as a "milor" he did not allow to be perceived—the croupier called "time" and the play was over.

Mr. Straps found M. le Capitaine, as he was called by the frequenters of the salon, extremely affable, and quite inclined to accept his invitation to a "strong breakfast" at a house which he strongly recommended in the rue des Perles Moulins which M. le Capitaine patronised, probably from an association of ideas as somewhat resembling a French translation of an early coffee-house in our Little Windmill Street, Haymarket, which was in close proximity to Soho, the Argyl Rooms, and that dirty district where foreigners most do congregate, the boulevard of which was the new verdant rus in arde known to many an exile as "Lancaster Square."

Here then in "the street of Little Windmills," Mr. Straps and M. le Capitaine sat down to a "harlequin," a compound dish of meats and vegetables of which the constituents are known only to a French traiteur, a loaf of "fine bread" and a bottle of Burgundy; and as Mr. Straps disabused freely for a second bottle after a "caçon" of o. d. v. as a digestive the red-nosed croupier became loquaciously communicative.

Fitzgerald, in fact, took a liking to Straps. His self-sufficiency and paraquet conceit, joined to his natural shrewdness, was rather amusing than offensive to the Irish adventurer, who originally a man of education and family, had sunk through vice and improvidence from his original and proper social rank, to herd with the drags of the vilest population in Europe, the lower orders of Paris; yet Fitzgerald, in his better moments, had the pride and punctilio of a born gentleman, almost ludicrously mixed up with his low tastes, low associations, and settish habits.

That's an open-handed gentleman, Mr. Straps, that friend of Mister Luttrell's, your master, I mean, Mr. —?"

"Dorrington, Jasper Dorrington, son and heir to Sir Herbert Dorrington, baronet, of Dorrington Park. That's his title when he's at 'ome, and an out-and-out buck he is, and no mistake. But, I say, capin, don't you think he's a trifle too thick with that Mr. Luttrell, as you seem to know, and all our people make so much of?"

"That was exactly what I was thinking, Mr. —."

"Oh, there's no disguise about me, capin, my name's Straps, Mister Straps, if you like to call me so. I've been brought up in Mr. Jasper's family in the stable from so high, afore I could reach more nor a ten-hand pony's back to rub him down for the young gaffer; and I loves him as my own brother, and if so be that I knew anything that might turn agin him I'd out with it, whoever had to 'bide the consequences!'"

"You're a good fellow, Mr. Straps, and your master ought to value you; such people are scarce, nowadays, Mr. Straps. This is good Burgundy, Mr. Straps," and the captain trolled out:

A bumper of Burgundy fill, fill for me;
Give those who prefer it Champagne;
But whatever the wine, it a bumper must be,
If I ne'er drink a bumper agin,
And now that the cares of the day are gone
By,
And all man's best feelings possess him,
And the soul lights the beacon of truth in the
eye,
Here's a health to the King—God bless
him!

There, Mr. Straps, that's a verio of a song that was in fashion when I was a swell, with my cab and my tiger in Rotten Row, when Gentleman George was King."

And the singer, who had yet the remains of a fine voice for a chauson a boire, suiting the action to the word, poured out another bumper for himself and one for Mr. Straps, and continued:

"The Romans of old, at their banquets were
told,
When to those whom they honoured they
quaffed;
Threw pearls of great price in their goblets of
gold,
More costly to render the draught.
I boast not of gems, but my heart's in the
glass,
Of my love nought shall e'er dispossess
him,
Then pledge me in bumpers, round, round, let
it pass;
Here's a health to the King—God bless
him!

"Brayvo! brayvo!" chorused Mr. Straps, who was becoming rapidly non compos, under the effects of the coarse red wine, with an occasional nip of cognac, "another bottle, garçon, silver-plate," that's the lingo, I believe, ain't it, capin?"

"I believe you, my boy," echoed the captain, with the tone and manner of old Paul Bedford, "perfectly Parisian. And now I'll give you a wrinkle about Mr. Luttrell. 'He's no better nor worse than a professional play-man, and if he don't pluck you, young master clean before he's done with him, my name's not Captain Fitzgerald. I owe him no love, Mr. Straps, not I. He once tried to get me shot, Mr. Straps, in an affair of honour, by taking a mean advantage of me, and when he thought I was knocked over why he lent a hand to chuck me into the sea, and I might have been fishes' food, Mr. Straps, instead of being here drinking this jolly good Burgundy with a

jolly good fellow like yourself, Mr. Straps, for what he'd have cared!"

"Well, I never!" hiccapped Mr. Straps, "heered anything like that, in all my born days. Got his friend to shoot you, cap'n, and then lent a hand to pitch you into the sea. Owo him no favour! I should think not, indeed. Why, cap'n, if a fellow had carved me that fashion, I'd have indited him at the sessions, I would, and have hanged him as soon as looked at him, the murdering varmint!"

"Oh, I can give you chapter and verse for much more than that about your master's friend, but, mind you, Mr. Straps, mum's the word; the bottle stands with you, Mr. Straps!"

(To be Continued.)

OATHS.

THE oath, for purposes of classification, may be best defined as an asseveration made under superhuman penalty, such penalty being (as in the ordeal), either magical or religious in its nature, or both combined. Here, then, we distinguish the oath from the mere declaration, or promise, or covenant, however formal. For example, the covenant by grasping hands is not in itself an oath, nor is even that widespread ancient ceremony of entering into a bond of brotherhood by the two parties mixing drops of their blood, or tasting each other's. This latter rite, though often called an oath, can under this definition be only reckoned as a solemn compact. But when a Galla of Abyssinia sits down over a pit covered over with a hide, imprecating that he may fall into a pit if he breaks his word, or when our police-courts we make a Chinaman swear by taking an earthen saucer and breaking it on the rail in front of the witness box, signifying, as the interpreter then puts it in words, "if you do not tell the truth your soul will be cracked like this saucer," we have here two full oaths, of which the penalty, magical or religious, is shown in pantomime before us.

By the way, the English judges who authorised this last sensational ceremony must have believed that they were calling on a Chinaman to take a judicial oath after the manner of his own country; but they acted under a mistake, for in fact the Chinese use no oaths at all in their law courts. Now we have to distinguish these real oaths from mere asseverations, in which emphatic terms or descriptive gestures are introduced merely for the purpose of showing the strength of resolve in the declarer's mind. Where, then, does the difference lie between the two? It is to be found in the incurring of supernatural penalty. There would be no difficulty at all in clearing up the question, were it not that theologians have set up a distinction between oaths of imprecation and oaths of witness. Such subtleties, however, looked at from a practical point of view, are seen to be assistive cobwebs which a touch of the rough broom of common sense will sweep away.

The practical question is this: Does the swearer mean that by going through the ceremony he brings on himself, if he breaks faith, some special magic harm, or divine displeasure and punishment? If so, the oath is practically imprecatory; if not, it is futile, wanting the very sanction which gives it legal value. It does not matter whether the imprecation is stated or only implied. When a Bedouin picks up a straw and swears by Him who made it grow and wither, there is no need to accompany this with a homily on the fate of the perjurer. This reticence is so usual in the world, that as often as not we have to go outside the actual formula and ceremony to learn what their full intention is.

Let us now examine some typical forms of oath. The rude natives of New Guinea swear by the sun, or by a certain mountain, or by a weapon, that the sun may burn them, or the mountain crush them, or the weapon wound them, if they lie. The even ruder savages of the Brazilian forests, to confirm their words, raise the hand over the head or thrust it into their hair, or they will touch the points of their weapons. These two accounts of savage ceremony introduce us to customs well known to nations of higher culture. The raising of the hand toward the sky seems to mean here what it does elsewhere. It is in gesture calling on the Heaven god to smite the perjurer with his thunderbolt. The touching of the head, again, carries its meaning among these Brazilians almost as plainly as in Africa, where we find men swearing by their heads or limbs, in the belief that they would wither if forsworn; or as when among the Old Prussians a man would lay his right hand on his own neck and his left on the holy oak, saying: "May Perkun (the thunder-god) destroy me!"

As to swearing by weapons, another graphic instance of its original meaning comes from Aracan, where the witness swearing to speak the truth takes

in his hand a musket, a sword, a spear, a tiger's tusk, a crocodile's tooth, and a thunderbolt (that is, of course, a stone) celt. The oath by the weapon not only lasted on through classic ages, but remained so common in Christendom, that it was expressly forbidden by a synod; even in the seventeenth century too, to swear on the sword (like Hamlet's friend in the ghost scene) was still a legal oath in Holstein. As for the holding up the hand to invoke the personal divine sky, the successor of this primitive gesture remains to this day among the chief acts in the solemn oaths of European nations.

SCIENCE.

PHOTO PLATES UNDER THE MICROSCOPE.—M. Jules Girard, who has published several valuable works upon the application of photography to the microscope, has just communicated to the Academy of Sciences the results of his interesting researches upon the transformation of collodion in photographic operations. A microscopic examination of collodion permits one to discover the texture of the film, and to follow the reactions which take place in the production of the luminous impression. When of good quality, the collodion plate is translucent and colourless in the event in the collodion being perfectly dissolved; but its composition, age, and the actions which constitute sensitizing change its texture. The photomicrographs which M. Girard can enlarge to 50 diameters, demonstrated several phenomena. Old collodion which gives very fine images, but the rapidity of which leaves much to be desired, is shown to contain liquid bubbles holding unchanged ether. If the collodion contains alcohol, it has the appearance of a cellular tissue; and if there is much water in the collodion, the fibres of cotton become apparent in the form of flocculent matter. Collodion which is too thick gives intensity, but is not rapid; it has the appearance of an undulated cellular-vascular tissue. The irregularity of the film militates against the clearness of the image. Two indications or proofs are at hand at the time during which the action of sensitizing in the nitrate of silver bath is still incomplete, and of the moment when the operation has terminated. In the first case, the greasy marks, which are an indication of the sensitizing being still incomplete, are full of streaks and groups of crystals, some in the form of needles and some amorphous. It seems as if the crystals of iodide of silver, which were in course of formation, have been arrested in the midst of their development. In the second case, when the operation of sensitizing is complete, the texture of the film is homogeneous and compact. It is covered with a uniform network, rendered the more evident by those portions which are free from crystals. The greater part of the photographic action necessary to obtain an image is due to the successive transformation of the crystallographic system, the reaction of the iodide of silver being the most perceptible of all. The result is that an examination of the plate at different stages of the operation under a microscope of moderate power permits the operator to judge of the success or otherwise of the process he is employing.

IMPROVED ZINC WHITE.—A beautiful zinc white is produced by the following: Sulphuretted of raw barium is washed and the liquid obtained is mixed with equal quantities of chloride and sulphate of zinc. The precipitate is collected, pressed, and dried. It is then heated on a hearth, and, while hot, is thrown in cold water. This last treatment produces a mass of great density, and the material, after washing and grinding, is of great purity and whiteness.

LINING metal for axle boxes: Tin 24 parts, copper 4, antimony 8. Melt together, and add 24 parts more tin.

NEW BREACHLOADING RIFLE.—From Sweden we receive accounts of a new breechloading rifle, the invention of an engineer named Bohmann. It is stated that from twenty to twenty-five rounds per minute can be fired from this weapon, and that during experiments recently conducted at Mariberg 500 rounds were fired without the piece being cleaned in any way. The peculiar novelty of Bohmann's system, however, is that by the introduction of a chamber the rifle can be readily converted into a "repeater." The chambers at present provided are of two sizes, and it is stated that with the larger eleven rounds can be fired in fifteen seconds, and with the smaller six rounds in six seconds.

FLOWER COLOURS.—One would hardly think that the fragrant violet and the bright coloured iris would ever be utilised in commerce, but it seems that an Italian chemist has just found out that they may be put to some other purpose than that of gladdening the eye and refreshing the nose. They yield, it appears, a very fine blue colour, and this is so sensitive to exterior influences, as to render it of considerable value

to the analytical chemist. Most people know that one of the best and most delicate tests employed by chemists to ascertain whether a solution is acid or not is to dip into it a piece of blue litmus paper, which at once reddens if the least trace of acidity exists. In like manner the reddened litmus paper may be employed in searching for alkalies, for the paper returns to a blue tint on coming in contact with those. The colouring principle of the violet and iris is found to be more delicate still than litmus, and for this reason we may expect soon to see phyllocyanin—for so the new colour is called—introduced into all our laboratories.

JEWS IN PALESTINE.

A Jew, looking round him, say, in England, and contemplating the position which his brethren in faith have attained, feels a natural pride. In the Senate, at the bar, in literature, in art, Jews have taken places in the foremost rank, and I do not think they would be disposed to depart from their high places to be magnates in Jerusalem, however sincerely they may pray for the day of restoration. Modern enlightenment and intellectual progress have not been lost upon the Semitic tribes in their western wandering and settlements, and among other things they have learned that religious aspirations must bow down somewhat to the influences of the times. This may be a dangerous statement for a Jewish writer to make of his people, but the time has come when it may be well for us to look straight in the face such facts as these.

The Jewish inhabitants in Palestine are very numerous; and in Jerusalem alone there are, I believe, about ten thousand. Of these but a small portion are indigenous, the great majority being immigrants from Poland and Eastern Germany. Polish Jews are the most orthodox of the scattered tribes. From their youth they study Hebrew literature and theology, and in Poland at the present day are to be found the most accomplished Hebrew savans. If these men could set down the results of their study and their learning in an intelligible language, there would be a new literature which would outlive the work of the lamented Emanuel Deutsch. Trained from infancy to look upon Jerusalem as the goal of earthly happiness, they gladly avail themselves of any opportunity of removing from their native towns with their wives and families to the Holy City. The influence upon them of the place and its traditions and associations, is to intensify the religious feeling within them.

They repair to the synagogue three or four times daily, and spend the rest of their time in the study of the Talmud and kindred works. There are others who fly to Palestine to elude the conscription, and others again to escape the necessity of maintaining their wives and families, whom they do not take with them to the Promised Land. The result of the building up of the Jewish population by these processes is not happy, and Palestine has fallen to a considerable depth in the social scale. Of late it must be acknowledged, to the credit of our people there, that the Jewish inhabitants generally have strenuously exerted themselves to remove the stigma that has fallen upon them, by engaging to some extent in manufacture, by tilling the soil, and by cultivating various other branches of industry. But the poverty of the mass of the population has crippled their endeavours to raise themselves out of their abject condition.

For a long time past the Jews everywhere have been sending sums of money to be distributed among the poor of the Holy Land, and as the major portion of the population have fallen under the denomination of paupers, most of them have been in the regular receipt of the charity thus provided. The natural result has followed. The prospect of a life of idleness and freedom has attracted to the old country large numbers of Jews who, under the pretence of coming to Jerusalem to be buried in holy ground, have swelled the ranks of the idle and indigent objects of charity. Children have grown up to look to the portion of relief sent from abroad as their own by legal right, and the pauper community has flourished in its miserable way under this demoralising system of dependence. For a while this went on without exciting criticism, but presently it began to be said, in this country and elsewhere, that the Jews of Palestine cared not to labour so long as the means of living was provided for them. The charge, of course, was only partially true.

At the present moment I believe the majority of the Jews in Palestine are extremely desirous of earning an independent livelihood, and many of my co-religionists in this country and elsewhere have too rashly accused the whole Hebrew population of Palestine of having fallen into a state of pauperised and contented idleness.

SELF-CONSCIOUS.

THE self-consciousness of vanity is one thing, the self-consciousness of shyness another. It is all very well for metaphysicians to try and prove that charity and generosity are merely selfishness under another name, because every man does what he likes best to do, and if he likes to be generous, likes to be charitable, he is only following out his own inclinations, and no one need praise him. It is selfishness under a mask, and with another name—if a pretty one, yet always selfish. So with self-consciousness. If you are conscious at all, say the metaphysicians, you must needs be vain. But, in spite of the metaphysicians, there are two forms of self-consciousness, and that which springs from shyness is in no wise identical with that which springs from vanity.

Whoever suffers from the self-consciousness of shyness, of timidity, of sensitiveness, knows an amount of pain which no one without such weakness can well understand. To be perpetually haunted by the feeling that one has done something wrong, or said something foolish, is of itself a torture that would almost wipe away the stain of a serious offence by the virtue which lies in punishment. But the worst of it is, this anguish of mind is almost always about little things—mere trifles, which are of really no consequence one way or the other, but which the exaggerating fancy of the self-conscious makes in to, absolute misfortunes, or, if it should be that way into real crimes.

All of us at times speak too fast, with too little consideration of how our words may sound and be taken by the hearer; hence we say things that we regret, and things that we do not mean—things that bear a double construction the farthest removed from our intention, and which strikes on our senses only when too late to be recalled. To apologise for the meaning that may be found beneath would be to flounder only the deeper in the mire. For there is just the one hope that when you speak of les nouveaux riches, with a sniff of disdain, to anyone, he will not take your sniff in any way to himself. But if pressed by self-consciousness you apologise and say, "I did not mean you," he can then have no doubt as to the application and his own position in your estimate of things. You might not have really meant him when you spoke so scornfully of the new rich, and their ways and works; but to acknowledge that your words could have struck him is to concede the whole question, and your friend is justly annoyed at your blunder.

An unconscious person who had made the same mistake would not have apologised—would probably not have seen that it was a mistake at all, because of that very want of self-consciousness, hence the feelings of the person already alluded to would not have been wounded, as he would, in the first place, have seen that he was not meant, and, in the second, would not be forced to understand that he might have been alluded to—only he wasn't. Meanwhile the poor self-conscious tripper suffers torments, has a sleepless night, and cannot look his friend in the face tranquilly for weeks after.

THE PRIVATE MARRIAGE.

CHAPTER II.

CLARENCE CHURCHILL was infatuated. He thought that Stella was the dearest, truest, simplest little creature in the world.

He endowed her with all the ideal virtues. Stella was beautiful and attractive to begin with; it was no difficult matter to credit her with all the lovely qualities of mind and heart that would have matched her lovely face.

Stella was incapable of appreciating him. He bored her, to tell the honest truth.

There was a frightful sameness in the long moonlit or starlit nights when he would come and hold a cheerful, peaceful monologue for hours. "He was not of her kind."

A generous-hearted, simple-minded fellow whose aim was to fulfil his duty to Heaven and his neighbour—what possible sympathy between him and her?

She plainly perceived that he was in love with her, and that he meant to ask her to marry him.

She made up her mind that she would. Why not? She would be better off as his wife than she was now.

He was a weak fool, and, once married to him, she would be sure to have her own way. If he grew to be intolerably wearisome, she would leave him. Good people were so tiresome. How she wished Clarence Churchill were more like that lawyer, Sharpe, who had admired her.

There was a certain spice of sadness about a man like that. She was not good herself, and it seemed hard that she should be forced to marry a good young man like Clarence.

Still she married him. She made a lovely bride too.

The Churchills received her into the family with open arms. They gave her beautiful wedding presents. They expended taste and time and money in making beautiful the home that Clarence took her to.

Mrs. Wylie was to live with her daughter. Stella deplored this, but there was no help for it, especially as Stella wished to use the Wylie money which had been left unreservedly to her mother. Otherwise I am of the opinion that Mrs. Wylie would have been packed off to Brickville.

"Don't you think that Stella has changed very much since her marriage?" Ellen Churchill asked her sister. "Had you any notion how fond she was of gaiety before?"

"No. And I am sorry. Clarence looks so jagged and worn all the while. He can't stand the late hours she keeps, after a hard day's work. Still he would walk to the stake with joy, if Stella wished it. How desperately in love with her he is!"

"Yes. He told me last night that he had never dreamed, a year ago, how much happiness there was in life. He said that he had always fancied his was not a nature capable of a passionate love, and that depths of feeling had been revealed to him by Stella which he marvelled at."

"It is a dreadful thing to say, but I don't believe she cares a rush for him."

"O, Ellen!"

"No, I do not. I often wondered why she married him. A pretty woman like that would never want for lovers. But Clarence thinks that she adores him. He went on to say it was wonderful that she should love him as devotedly as she did."

"But she is very demonstrative, very affectionate to him."

"Yes; but she speaks of him in the coldest possible way. She is a good actress. But she does not care a rush for Clarence."

And yet nothing could have been prettier, more devoted than Stella's manner to her husband, that very evening, when he came home to dinner, and when she had made herself look her loveliest to receive him.

To be sure, she dragged him out to a dancing party, rather against his will, later in the evening; but Clarence scarcely realised he did not want to go when Stella laid her lovely head on his shoulder, and told him in cooing tones how wild she was for a waltz.

Mrs. Churchill developed as a woman of society. Her former acquaintances would hardly have recognised in this elegant woman the little country-girl of three or four years ago.

She made no secret of her lowly origin to Clarence. She described her life in Brickville to him, the people she had known there; only concerning her acquaintance with Steve Lownes did she observe a discreet silence.

Clarence cared very little whom she had known, what she had done before she had met him. If the blood of all the Howards had flowed in her veins, he could not have loved her more dearly.

Stella took great credit to herself for being as affectionate and devoted a wife to him as she was.

Often this was an irksome task to her. Clarence bored her. He always had bored her.

One day Clarence came in somewhat late for dinner; and he did not come in alone.

He was very apt to bring some one in unexpectedly—a custom which Stella decidedly encouraged. Any thing to break the monotony of the tete-a-tete.

As she came down her pretty parlour to receive her husband's friend, she recognised in him an old acquaintance—Steve Lownes.

She put out her soft little hand with a smile.

"Mr. Lownes," she said, "I remember you perfectly, although you may not recall me. I was Stella Wylie. I lived in Brickville."

Steve stammered, reddened, like the clumsy lout he was. But he accepted her cue.

"I remember you, Miss Stella—I beg pardon—Mrs. Churchill. This is quite unexpected, I'm sure."

"So you and my wife are old friends?"

"Hardly that. I used to see Mr. Lownes driving in and out of town, and stopping at the post-office, and so on. But I was only a little girl. I'm surprised he remembers me at all."

Stella contrived to drill her mother in the part she desired her to play before Steve, and Mrs. Wylie met him at the dinner table.

Mrs. Wylie wisely took refuge in silence, and Steve was too much embarrassed to start many topics of conversation himself.

Yes, Steve Lownes was a clumsy lout, and Clarence Churchill was a gracious gentleman; and yet Stella's restless heart throbbed at the sound of Steve's voice at the touch of Steve's hand, as it had never done for Clarence.

It is unaccountable how these things are ordered. She longed to find out where he was living, what he was doing in the world; whether he had children—about his wife.

But she was forced to control her impatience.

She ascertained by degrees that he was living on a farm not many miles away; that he had come to Hesperus to consult about an investment.

Finally he said, "I have had a hard time with my helpmate my wife died;" and then Stella knew that Mary Lownes was no more.

Steve wished her to know this, and he had no notion of breaking the news gently to her.

After this Steve came to Hesperus often.

Clarence never failed to ask him to his house, and gradually Steve fell into the way of coming there as a matter of course.

His old infatuation for Stella returned with redoubled force.

At first he did not allude to the past.

Finally he broke the ice one day. He asked her whether she realized how things stood.

"If you have forgotten that you are my wife, I haven't," he informed her.

"But what are you going to do about it?" asked Stella, with audacious front.

"I'll let you know when I've made up my mind. We were married by special license that day in Carrollton. I can show you the license any day. The magistrate didn't know either of us, and we gave him our middle names instead of our Christian names, but the knot was tied fast all the same. Say now, how soon you'll be ready to leave that soft fool of a Churchill and come to me?"

His coarseness did not shock her in the least.

She laughed again.

"I'll let you know when I'm ready," she said.

She hardly appreciated the kind of brute force she was trifling with.

Steve resolved one day to take the law into his own hands. He went to Clarence Churchill and told him all, as Clarence sat at his table in his private room at the bank. Told him all. Clarence listened as though it were a hideous dream. For confirmation Lownes showed him the marriage license above referred to.

Clarence went home to dinner as usual, still under the influence, so to speak, of a horrid nightmare.

That afternoon he had asked his wife to take a drive with him into the country to look at a place which he had just bought, and which he wanted to put into thorough repair under her directions.

Clarence had a great fancy for country life.

It was a dream of his to own a few acres of land, to raise his own vegetables, grow his own fruits, have his own butter and eggs.

Stella hated the notion, but she did not openly oppose it; she was too wise a woman for that. On the contrary, she agreed to help Clarence put the house in order, undertaking to see the workmen herself. She was a better business woman, Clarence had discovered, than he had given her credit for.

She noticed how exceedingly abstracted and silent Clarence was during their drive to Oakglade, as well as during dinner.

Clarence was trying, for his part, to make up his mind to tell her of his frightful interview with Lownes.

But the words died on his lips. And yet he felt that he must tell her before they reached home again.

She must deny that foul charge, or he could not cross the threshold with her of that home which had been a paradise.

They went through the house, built by a millionaire of paper lots, and then sold by him for a mere song; over the garden; then to the out-houses.

The barn took Stella's fancy. It recalled the barn at Hayfield where Steve had proposed to her.

She exclaimed with interest and pleasure.

Nothing would satisfy her but that Clarence should climb into the loft with her.

Here she sank down on a stack of hay to rest, laughing and excited, as she was apt to be on slight provocation.

Suddenly Clarence told his tale, leaning against the wall meanwhile in his great agitation.

Close to them was an opening in the floor which went all the way down, through the ground floor, to the cellar, a distance of many feet.

Stella's heart died within her.

She was wearied of Clarence, but she was not wearied of the honour and the respectability that accompanied the being his wife.

Was all this to be taken from her?

She looked up at him with a feeling of resentment against him. She had no moral nature. She did not blame herself for the consequences of her past folly; but she bitterly resented the way he was now speaking of her.

"In Hen son's name, what did the man mean? He must have had some handle for the horrible things he said. Don't deceive me, Stella. Tell me the worst. I can stand it."

He took a step forward. She rose to her feet. By a sudden, mad impulse, she dealt a quick blow which sent him staggering through that hole in the floor—down, down.

She sat there and listened until his groans grew lower and lower, less and less frightful. She held her watch in her hand, and sat there an hour by it. Then, when the moans had ceased altogether, she climbed down from the left, and made her way to the wagon they had come in. She drove herself into Hesperus, and roused her friends, the doctor—the Churchills. But when they all reached Oakglade, life was extinct in Clarence Churchill.

It was a fearful accident, every one agreed.

Would that poor little woman ever recover from the shock?

As the cortege from Oakglade passed up the main street of Hesperus, some ladies saw it, having just driven into town. The news had spread like wildfire; a bystander told him they were carrying home Clarence Churchill's dead body.

"So I've won the game, have I?" Steve muttered to himself.

Yes. And, like many another game, it proved itself not worth the winning. What a horrible tale I have told!

REUBEN; OR, ONLY A GIPSY.

CHAPTER XXII.

Eaton Villa, Park Lane, was, as Mr. Normanby expressed it, a comfortable little box for three or four people who did not want to indulge in the magnificent, and at a glance Olive saw that it would suit her father.

"It is a beautiful little house, my dear sir," he said, turning to Mr. Normanby; "and I am surprised that you can bear to let it."

"If" said Mr. Normanby, "What should I do in such a place—with eight bedrooms, reception rooms, pantry, and coal cellar. My dear Sir Edward, I should hang myself from that ornamental balustrade before the first week was out. I should, indeed. For I am a miserable wretched, and a small set of rooms in Half-Moon Street, Piccadilly, are good enough for me. They are not luxurious, and are not large."

"No," said Morgan, as he rose to go, "you couldn't swing a cat in any one of them."

"Exactly," remarked Mr. Normanby; "and I never have yet wasted a sawing a cat—when I do I will take larger rooms."

"Good-bye," said Sir Edward, "I am really very grateful to you for letting us have this charming box, and I am sure we shall be very happy to see the owner, and you, Mr. Morgan, whenever you can find it agreeable to give us a visit."

The gentlemen bowed their thanks over Olive's hand, and Mr. Normanby, as they left the room, looked back to add:

"If you don't like the cook call up the housekeeper and tell her to send him round to me, Sir Edward. He has a knack of putting too much pepper in a curry, but that I think is his only failing. Good-bye."

And the two gentlemen left Sir Edward and Olive to enjoy the novelty of the pretty bijou villa and its beautifully tasteful contents.

"Oh, this is delightful, papa, dear!" said Olive, flitting from room to room. "And it is really our own to do what we like in for—how long?"

"As long as we please. That is a clever lawyer, that Mr. Normanby," added Sir Edward, thoughtfully. "But we really ought to be grateful to Morgan Verner, for it was he who first thought of the villa."

"Ye—s," said Olive.

"And now, my dear, for the letters. Ah, here is one from my cousin, Mrs. Davenport. Read it, Olive."

And he sank into a chair.

"It is very short, papa, dear. She is delighted to hear that we are in town, and she will chaperone me with pleasure, but is sorry—so sorry, that it is the off season, and no one, positively no one, in town. And, oh, papa, here are cards to the Countess of Oranmore's evening on Wednesday, and there's a

fancy ball at Lady Sparkleton's, and nobody in town. Why, London seems full enough to give a party every night. Oh, papa, I shall enjoy myself so!"

"You will, dear Olive," sighed Sir Edward, with a smile.

"Yes, and so shall you. You shall go to your club, and see all your old friends, and ride with me in the park, and give a little dinner party to some of the old gentlemen you used to meet at the Guards, and—"

"Hem!" said Sir Edward, taking up a letter with a crest upon it. "Lord Craven is coming to town, my dear."

And Olive's voice dropped into silence.

A fortnight later, and one morning, at the early hour of twelve, Mr. Normanby sat in his tasteful little chamber at breakfast.

If not luxurious, there was but little the room lacked to make it so; every chair was an easy one; the upholstery was the best of its kind; the hangings were of some soft Oriental fabric, and the whole was of that subdued tone which marks an educated and refined taste.

There was no crimson and gold. In place of the usual mirror there hung above the mantel a marble which Mr. Normanby had bought for a pound, and for which he had refused five hundred.

The breakfast service was of a classic Venetian design; the viands perfectly cooked and tempting; by his elbow, and within reach of his white hand, stood a flask of Burgundy.

It was all a mystery how all these things were obtained; the greatest mystery of all was Mr. Normanby himself.

Propped up against the Burgundy was a dozen ominous letters, and as Mr. Normanby toyed with his breakfast he eyed them occasionally with a smile which, though contemplative, was placidly serene.

A sudden and sharp knock at the door interrupted his contemplation, but did not disturb his serenity.

In response to the "come in" which fell smoothly and languidly from under Mr. Normanby's moustache, entered Mr. Morgan Verner, presenting the very opposite to his calm and serene friend.

He was badly, though expensively dressed, his face pale and blotchy, his manner half nervous and half insolent.

"Ah!" murmured Mr. Normanby, "up already, tasting the freshness of the morn. What a simple country nature is yours, my dear Morgan!"

"Don't," said Morgan, dropping into a chair and thrusting his hands into his pocket. "I'm in no mood for chaff, this morning, Nor. I'm ready."

"I've remarked," said Normanby, delicately wiping his white fingers on the scarcely writer napkin, "that for general use, my dear Morgan, late hours, and an absurd liking for that vulgar spirit called brandy, I fear, are not conducive to good health and temper."

"Temper!" said Morgan, "enough to make an angel mad. You talk of brandy too; you drink sometimes?"

"Often," said Normanby, sweetly, "but I own to a certain fastidiousness what I drink. As a proof permit me, my dear Morgan, to pour you a glass of Burgundy?"

Morgan granted, tossed the precious wine down his throat, and fell back into his old position.

"Look at me," he said.

Mr. Normanby raised his eyeglass and did so. Morgan shifted uneasily under the calm and almost contemptuous regard.

"Here am I, the heir to a large estate, supposed to have no end of money, and a father to back me to any amount, yet I can't put my hand on a ten pound note. Look," and he drew from his pocket a handful of letters, and threw them on the table.

"Bills, every one of them; all pressing. One man swears he'll have his money by to-morrow night, another says he's got a writ out already. What am I to do? Yesterday I got a cheque from the governor, and where is it?"

"Some of it," said Mr. Normanby, "here," and he tapped a pocket-book on the table. "Some of it Captain Wilkes and Mr. Shirley could answer for. Pool, my dear Morgan is one of the finest crucibles for melting cheques and hard cash I know of. You would play last night; you lost—"

"And you won!" snarled Morgan.

"Exactly!" said Mr. Normanby. "I won. Do not let that grieve you, my dear Morgan, for I also have bills, as you may observe," and he threw a little pellet of bread at the envelopes on the table. "Bills, my dear Morgan, of the same kind and kind as yours, but do they crush me? No! I revel in them, I love them, and, wonderful to relate, I pay them!"

Morgan snarled.

"You do! How? You are a mystery, Normanby; people say you have no money!"

"For once people speak truth."

"And that you spring from no one knows where," continued Morgan, maliciously.

"Beautifully and delicately expressed," said Mr. Normanby with scorn; "but pray spare me any further report of club gossip, dear Morgan, and take some more Burgundy. Yes, I pay my bills and I could show you how to pay yours—but why—"

"Why!" repeated Morgan. "And you call yourself my friend?"

"And so I am," murmured Mr. Normanby with a gentle smile. "Do I not win your money, my dear Morgan? Do I not give you good counsel—which you never follow? Yes, I am your friend, and I would be more so if—"

"If what?" asked Morgan, impatiently.

"If I were sure you were worth it," said Normanby, coolly.

"What have I done?" commenced Morgan, gradually growing infuriated by the deadly serpent-like fascination of Normanby's smile and manner. "Why don't you help me, as you say you will; why don't you prove yourself my friend. One day you hinted that you would do great things for me, do 'em and I'll show whether I can't be grateful."

"Grateful," said Mr. Normanby. "Could you, I wonder—let us see—suppose, I only say suppose, I had it in my power to place a fortune in your hands?"

Morgan stared and took one hand out of his pocket to rub his chin.

"Suppose I knew the way to a certain glorious El Dorado, made more delicious by the addition of a certain beautiful woman, whom you could take to wife. Suppose—"

"Oh, hang supposing!" interrupted Morgan, impatiently, drawing his chair to the table and pulling the Burgundy towards him. "Normanby, I sometimes think you are the Evil One himself. I swear I'm half afraid of you, and I hate—yes, I hate to see you in this hateful soft smiling humour. Can't you speak out?"

"No; you are so unpleasant while you speak out, as you call it, that I do not think I'll chance it. Let us change the subject. How long has Olive Seymour been in town?"

Morgan started and stared at his friend with curious, puzzled eyes.

"A fortnight," he said. "Ah! and seems happy; full of enjoyment, eh?"

"Enjoyment!" retorted Morgan, "I suppose so. She and Mrs. Davenport have been running through all the balls and things that were on; haven't missed one; the gaping-stock of every idle booby left in town, and there is nothing her father dares her. Happy, of course she is, and here am I, the heir to the Grange, without a five-pound note in my pocket! Ah! there'll be a smash there some day, Normanby, and we shall be in it! Would you believe it, my father believes he'll get her for my wife—bah! bah! and he laughed discordantly. "And she hates me—yes, hates me!"

"That's promising," said Mr. Normanby, gravely. "Very promising. So Mr. Verner has an idea of wedding his son to the heiress of Dingley."

"You know that?" said Morgan, savagely. "You know everything! You remark a laughing-stock of me, as usual! Confound the girl. I'll throw it up! I've no chance, and I'll have no more to do with it."

"Poor fellow, he feels it! It is disappointment that makes him so reckless and restless!" mused Mr. Normanby aloud. "Your father is a clever man, Morgan."

Morgan grinned savagely.

"He's an idiot in this matter," he said. "I'm ready to bet he doesn't succeed in suiting Olive Seymour for me!"

"A wager," said Mr. Normanby, with a smile so significant that Morgan's eyes opened, then closed with a wary curiosity and astonishment.

"Ye—s!" he said. "I'll wager anything that Olive Seymour does not become Morgan Verner's bride?"

"And I," said Mr. Normanby, with a placid smile, "have so profound a confidence in your father's sagacity that I accept the wager—say, how much shall it represent?"

"Do you mean to say," said Morgan, slowly and emphatically, "that you will lay down my marriage with Olive Seymour?"

Mr. Normanby nodded, and Morgan stared at him. "Yes; just for amusement, my dear Morgan—just for amusement, let us say."

Morgan passed his hand across his hot brow, and his lips.

"You're a keen hand, Normanby, and beyond me; I believe, by Heaven! that you have some secret information!"

Mr. Normanby laughed softly.

"Nonsense, my dear Morgan; I rely only upon your father's wisdom. If he has set his heart upon your winning the hand of Dingley's heiress, I think, provided you do as he tells you, that you will win it; and therefore I am willing to accept a bet against the event. Let us say that you offer me five thousand pounds on the day of your marriage with the beautiful Olive?"

"Five thousand pounds!" mumbled Morgan; "that's a long bet!"

"Would you insult the wealth and majesty of the lady by making a smaller one? Remember the extent and richness of the Dingley estate—five thousand pounds are as a raindrop in a millpond to it—yes, say five thousand pounds."

"And just to make the matter more formal," continued Mr. Normanby, "suppose we put it in writing!"

Morgan nodded, and the pleased Mr. Normanby stretched across his chair and drew a paper from an escritoire which stood open at the side of him.

"Here is a properly stamped paper, and I will write in it these words:

"I, Morgan Verner, son of John Verner, Esquire, of the Grange, Deane Hollow, promise to pay William Normanby the sum of five thousand pounds on the day of my marriage with Olive Seymour, of Dingley Hall."

Morgan stared.

"That isn't a bet," he said.

"No; on consideration," said Mr. Normanby, "I think it would be better made to put it in this way; it seems to me had form to bet about a lady, eh?"

"As you like," said Morgan, nodding eagerly. "I see you have some deep money on hand, and though I can't see what I know now you are dead upon my marrying Olive, and will help me for the best of all reasons—"

"Self interest," said Mr. Normanby. "Allow me to hand you a pen," and he held out one of carved ivory.

Morgan took the paper and pen, and after a moment's hesitation signed the paper.

"There," he said, with a long breath, "and now show me your move. Nor!"

"Really, I don't understand," said Mr. Normanby, raising his eyebrows. "None! I have none! I am one of the most innocent creatures on earth; but if you ask me for my advice, my dear Morgan, it is, wait patiently until you get instructions from your father, and—pray pardon me—don't drink quite so much brandy!"

Morgan rose half angry, half puzzled.

"You're a mystery," he said; "I shan't get anything from you if I stay all day, I can see that; but mind me, I stick to my word! Five thousand pounds on the day of my marriage with Olive Seymour," and he nodded as he opened the door.

"Your word," smiled Mr. Normanby, as the door closed. "I have your bond, my dear cur—the word," and with a little nod of satisfaction he placed the paper amongst others in a little fanciful cabinet, which for all its delicate ornamentation was of iron and fire and burglar proof.

As he turned the key a gentle knock was heard upon the door, and Mr. Normanby returned to the table and assumed his indolent, careful attitude before giving the permission for entrance.

The door opened, and a strange figure for such a delicate, dainty room entered.

An old man, with wrinkled face and long white hair. He was dressed in a long gaberdine and a broad-brimmed hat, and bore about him that peculiar stealthy patience and acuteness so characteristic of the Hebrew race.

As his keen grey eyes fell upon the handsome Mr. Normanby they softened and grew as gentle as a woman's; and the voice, which some might reasonably have expected to be harsh and nasal, was as soft and musical, as he exclaimed:

"Raphael!" in Hebrew.

"Ah!" exclaimed Normanby, in the same language, and with so different a tone and manner that no one would have credited Mr. Normanby with them.

"You, father, and so early!"

"Yes, my son," assented the old man, carefully pressing his hand against the door to see if it was closed, and then coming forward and laying both his hands upon Mr. Normanby's hand, "yes, I have business with thee, and was glad of the excuse. Ah, Raphael! little do you know how dearly your fond, foolish father loves thee!"

"I know, believe me; I know and am grateful, father," said Mr. Normanby, rising as he spoke, and fetching a fresh bottle of Burgundy. "Come, you must drink with me—of course, you have breakfasted?"

"Ages since!" replied the old man. "I was in the office at dawn, Raphael, and at work. We are busy now, very busy, and the house of Ben Asa is proving great. Ah, great, Raphael, and worth money—all for you, my son, all for you!"

Mr. Normanby raised his glass and smiled affectionately over it.

"Not all, father!" he replied. "You also shall be great and wealthy; our people shall look to you as the head of a great, but powerful house."

"Aye, but will never know that the aristocrat, the man of fortune, the politician, the favourite of the great world, Horace Normanby, is his son!" said the Jew, with a half-mournful smile. "But it is right as

it is, Raphael. I would not have you a Jew again for the world. Years ago when I parted from you, and placed you in the hands of the people who adopted you, I swore that you should be a Christian, and a great man; that through you the Jewish race should taste revenge upon the proud infidels who spurn us. Raphael, you have satisfied my greatest hope! You—a Jew—are amongst the whole herd of dainty Christians—the daintiest and cleverest of them all; you work unseen, and bring grist to the mill, and you have not forgotten through it all your father and his people!"

"Nay, nor ever shall!" said Mr. Normanby. "Father, you think too well of me—too well; I am not the wonderful exotic you would have me, I—but enough—business, you said, father?"

"Aye," said the Jew. "Things are going apace in the quarter which you bade me watch. The great Iron Company is started, and two names are at its head. They are John Verner and Sir Edward Seymour!"

"Ah!" said Mr. Normanby, with sudden interest.

"Yes; the man of guile has snared the simple country baronet; and the first mesh of the net which is to entangle him and his pretty daughter is already netted."

"So!" said Mr. Normanby, "and how does the company go?"

"Well, well," replied the Jew. "Everything is flourishing; John Verner drives down to the City each day in his new carriage drawn by his new horses, and pride sits on his brow. In the evening—ah! hah!—in the evening he comes to me and humbly begs good Ben Asa to lend him gold that he may carry the fair game on!"

"He borrows still?" said Mr. Normanby.

"Still!" said the old Jew. "I could crush him in an hour, my Raphael; and will do so when you give the word."

"Fathome!" said Normanby. "Father, I have, like a woman, changed my mind. The Verners, father and son, must float a little longer—perhaps altogether. This morning, only this morning I have made up my mind that the marriage between the proud Olive Seymour and the little—shall I take place?"

The old Jew nodded and crossed his hands upon his stick.

"So! my son, I thought—forgive a fond father's thought—that my Raphael was taking that way himself."

Mr. Normanby's face flushed.

"No," he said, in a low, earnest voice. "It must not, shall not be. Father, if I married her I should love her, and then, farwell to ambition. No, I'll not be the slave of any woman—I should be hers—I should be hers! When I wed it will be to one who hangs upon my words and watches the expression of my eye as a dog watches its master! Power, not love, is my watchword, and power this marriage will give me."

"And how, my son?" asked the Jew with intense interest.

"Hush!" said Mr. Normanby, holding up his finger. "Conceal yourself, and learn!"

"Someone comes?" said the old man.

"Yes, my ears are quick, besides, this is the hour of appointment. Quick, my father, and do not stir until the visitor has gone!"

So saying Mr. Normanby touched a spring and from the wall opened a secret panel, disclosing a small space in which stood a comfortable lounge.

"Sit and rest, and listen," whispered Mr. Normanby, and as the secret panel closed he dropped into his chair and toyed with his wine-glass.

In another minute a knock was heard.

"Come in," said Mr. Normanby, and there entered John Verner.

Mr. Normanby advanced with a smile.

"Come, this is kind of you, my dear Mr. Verner," he said, shaking hands. "I had reason to fear that so busy a man as yourself would decline to waste your time upon such an idle individual as Horace Normanby."

"Not at all—not at all!" said John Verner, looking round the room with his hard smile.

"A glass of wine?" said Mr. Normanby.

"Never drink wine before dinner," said Mr. Verner.

"Of course not; and quite right, too," said Mr. Normanby. "A man who holds the money of thousands in his control has just cause to keep his head clear."

"You wanted to see me, Mr. Normanby," said John Verner, grimly, "on a matter of business?"

"Exactly," said Mr. Normanby, and as he sank into his chair a peculiar smile fitted over his handsome face—the fish before him for all its grinnings was already on his hook, and he wanted to see it writhes.

"I have ventured to ask for an interview, because I want a little advice. Mr. Verner, I am a poor man, but I have managed to save a few hundreds, and I should be grateful if you could tell me of a safe investment."

"Investment," said John Verner, his manner changing. "My dear sir, to such a question addressed to me, you can expect only one answer. You cannot do better than invest what money you have in the shares of the great Sylvan Iron Company, of which I am a director."

"It is quite safe?" said Mr. Normanby.

"Safe!" exclaimed John Verner, glancing under his brow. "I can only say that I have placed a large sum in the concern, Mr. Normanby, a very large sum."

"Thank you," said Mr. Normanby; "that being the case, I shall take the opportunity of running into the city and investing my money. And now, Mr. Verner, another little word of advice. I am not a man of business, and so you will forgive me if I go at the matter abruptly. My dear friend, Morgan, your excellent and worthy son, owes me several hundred pounds."

John Verner frowned.

"I trust, sir, that you were not imprudent enough to advance the money in the hope that I should repay it, if as you were grossly misled, I—"

"Thank you so much," said Mr. Normanby sweetly. "Of course you would not. No, I rest my hopes of payment on a firmer basis—"

"And that may be what may I ask?" said John Verner, sternly. "My death, I presume!" and he frowned angrily.

"No, nothing so painful to the feelings of all concerned!" replied Mr. Normanby. "No not on your death, but on the marriage of your son to Olive Seymour, of Dingley Hall!"

John Verner started and half-rose, then he sank down again and smiled faintly.

"A remote possibility I fear," he said.

"A fair probability and hope," retorted Mr. Normanby. "And I am so interested that I am anxious to give the oracles my assistance."

"Assistance and how?" asked John Verner, looking at the calm face with an uneasy suspicion.

"By putting you in the way of bringing about that result," said Mr. Normanby.

"You! how?" commenced John Verner.

Mr. Normanby smiled and brought his eyes to bear upon the steely ones of John Verner.

"How soon do you mean to ruin Sir Edward Seymour?"

This question put with a calm, not to say pleasant smile, literally staggered John Verner.

He stared for a moment with a crimson face which gradually grew pale almost to lividness as his grey steely eyes met the calm composed regard of Mr. Normanby's.

"Is this a jest, sir?" he stammered.

Mr. Normanby shook his head.

"I never jest on solemn subjects, Mr. Verner!" he said with amiable emphasis.

"Then I do not understand the significance of your strange question?" said John Verner, raising his hand and wiping the perspiration from his brow stealthily.

"Pray let me hasten to explain," said Normanby.

"Won't you take a more comfortable chair? No! Then I will proceed." And leaning back in a graceful and cosy attitude he said slowly and quite cheerfully: "You see, Mr. Verner, I am placed in the painful position of the man who finds out a secret without wishing to do so—your secret—"

"I have no secret, sir!" said John Verner, sternly, making one effort to recover his self-possession and carry the position.

"Yes," said Mr. Normanby softly, "we all have a secret, and yours is not an uncommon one. You are poor—miserably poor—dangerously poor! Pray forgive me for putting the fact so strongly; your strange delusion of thinking to deceive me necessitates it. This is your secret, because almost all the world deems you rich, very, influentially rich."

He paused a moment, and observed with rather a curious feeling that John Verner seemed almost relieved.

"It is you who are labouring under a delusion," said the master of Deane Hollow, "and one which I have no desire to dispel."

"Yes—exactly," said Mr. Normanby. "Let us take for granted that I am deluded; but, pray allow me to continue. You are poor, and you would be rich: therefore, for some years past you have been a speculator—shall I say a gambler? You lost—let me see," and he slowly drew some small ivory tablets from his pocket and referred to them, "you lost last year forty thousand pounds, the year before, thirty, and this year—"

John Verner half rose, and this time Mr. Normanby saw that he had hit the mark. John Verner's face was positively colourless.

"This year—well, you may win or lose, and, strange to say, the balance lies in my hands! Singular, is it not? But to proceed. You are a clever man, Mr. Verner, an exceedingly clever man, and but for this passion for gambling, which seems to have seized you, I should look up to you with the



[FATHER AND SON.]

most profound respect. From Paris you return to England to find your estate dilapidated, your coffers empty, and you look around for some means of repairing your fortunes. You think you find them in Sir Edward Seymour and his beautiful daughter, Olive!"

John Verner passed his hand across his forehead, and tried to smile.

"This is an extravagant fantasy of yours," he commenced.

But the other stopped him by a quiet movement of his hand.

"Sir Edward is rich, and knows little of the world. The richer a man is the more money he wishes to make. You tempt Sir Edward, and at last succeed in getting him to make the first plunge into the waters of speculation. So far, so good. Now for the daughter. You have a son—a promising young gentleman," here Mr. Normanby's smile was as full of scorn as a smile could be; "why not marry him to the heiress of Dingley? You decide that it shall be so, and that the gold from the Dingley coffers shall flow into the empty ones of the Grange. But how? Now it happens that, fascinating as my dear friend Morgan is, the young lady unwisely refuses to be charmed, and instead of winning her heart, the son positively wins her contempt! Really, it pains me to speak so plainly, but you are too much a man of the world, my dear Mr. Verner, to dislike the bare truth. Olive Seymour will not smile upon Morgan Verner, and, most awkward for your really pretty plans, the young gentleman blunders miserably in persecuting a favourite dependent of hers—and gets still further into her black books. I refer, of course, to the disagreeable incident of Reuben the gipsy's arrest and examination. Yes, Morgan fails utterly, but you do not despair, and you resolve to win the young lady for him as he cannot win her for himself."

Here Mr. Normanby passed the wine with a courteous gesture.

John Verner laid the bottle aside with his trembling hand, and did not remove his eyes from his tormentor's face.

"You devise an excellent scheme. Sir Edward has already taken the first plunge, has won a little money, and, like most weak and amiable men, thirsts for more. You show him the way. By the aid of money, raised—I must confess—I do not know how, you succeed in floating a grand company. The great Iron Company is a most promising affair, you are director, you have splendid offices, the shares stand high, and Sir Edward is only too delighted to become a brother director, and to invest a large sum in the concern which you are always berating and re-

commending. Now, that is all very fair and fine—but—ah, these buts—the grand Iron Company is a bubble!—a bubble which you can burst at any moment, and when the moment comes you will burst it!"

John Verner bit his lip, and smiled in a ghostly way.

"And ruin myself?" he said, hoarsely.

"No," said Mr. Normanby, "for before the fatal moment arrives you will have sold out all your shares and realised a large fortune, but will have omitted to warn Sir Edward, who will not only lose a large sum of money, but be liable for a still larger one!"

John Verner rose and took a stride towards the door as if in desperation, but returned and again confronted the calm, smiling face of the mysterious Mr. Normanby.

"Yes, ruin will stare the worthy baronet in the face, and with the utmost misery he will set about mortgaging his estate; then, what is your next move?"

He paused, and John Verner stared at him.

"You don't quite know, perhaps. It is likely that I may be able to help you. I will do so. No thanks! Listen. When things have arrived at that stage, you go to him and say with noble generosity, that you will advance the money, and when the mortgage deeds are drawn up, you, with a magnificent speech—"

Then Mr. Normanby stopped and smiled curiously.

"No, on second thoughts, I will not proceed. I have told you enough to demonstrate that I see your hand, and I will not show you how to play it until we have decided, in a friendly way, whether I am to spoil your game or stand at your elbow and help you."

John Verner wiped his face and lips, and essayed to speak.

Mr. Normanby continued:

"It is a painful thing," he said, airily; "but, as a man of the world, I cannot believe in that beautiful adage, 'Honesty is the best policy.' I don't believe it is! It is your villain who succeeds and crawls into the high places of the earth, from which he can smile down and pelt the honest creatures grubbing in the plains below him! I like honesty—I adore it, but I cannot afford it. It is a luxury, and I am too poor to indulge in them, therefore, Mr. Verner, I will consent to act as an accomplice in your pretty piece of villainy if you accept my poor and humble services. I am willing to be as great a rogue as you are; if not, if you prefer to wear the transparent mask, and play the virtuous indignant—in fact, if you

dare me to do my worst, I will most assuredly do it."

"You—you will do what?" asked John Verner, hoarsely.

"Go this afternoon, when it is a little cooler—I don't like the hot pavements—place the interesting facts and truths of the case before the worthy baronet!"

John Verner started and trembled, and as Mr. Normanby pushed the wine towards him he seized the bottle, and filling himself a glass poured the contents down his parched throat.

Then, with a long breath, he drew his chair to the table, and leaning forward said, in a hushed whisper:

"And if I accept your help. If I place myself in your power"—("In which you are already!" murmured Mr. Normanby, secretly)—"what is the price you ask?"

"Come," retorted Normanby, cheerfully; "this is the right light in which to view the matter. What a pity we could not have arrived at this pleasant result without so much painfully plain speaking. My dear sir, I begin to think that you really are worthy of my respect. My price for placing you in possession of a large fortune, of securing the hand of Olive Seymour, the heiress, for your unprepossessing son Morgan, and of elevating to a pinnacle of universal benediction is—exactly twenty thousand pounds, and—"

John Verner started back and groaned.

Mr. Normanby smiled.

"I have not quite finished; hear me out, and one groan will do for the whole. And your influence at the next Parliamentary election."

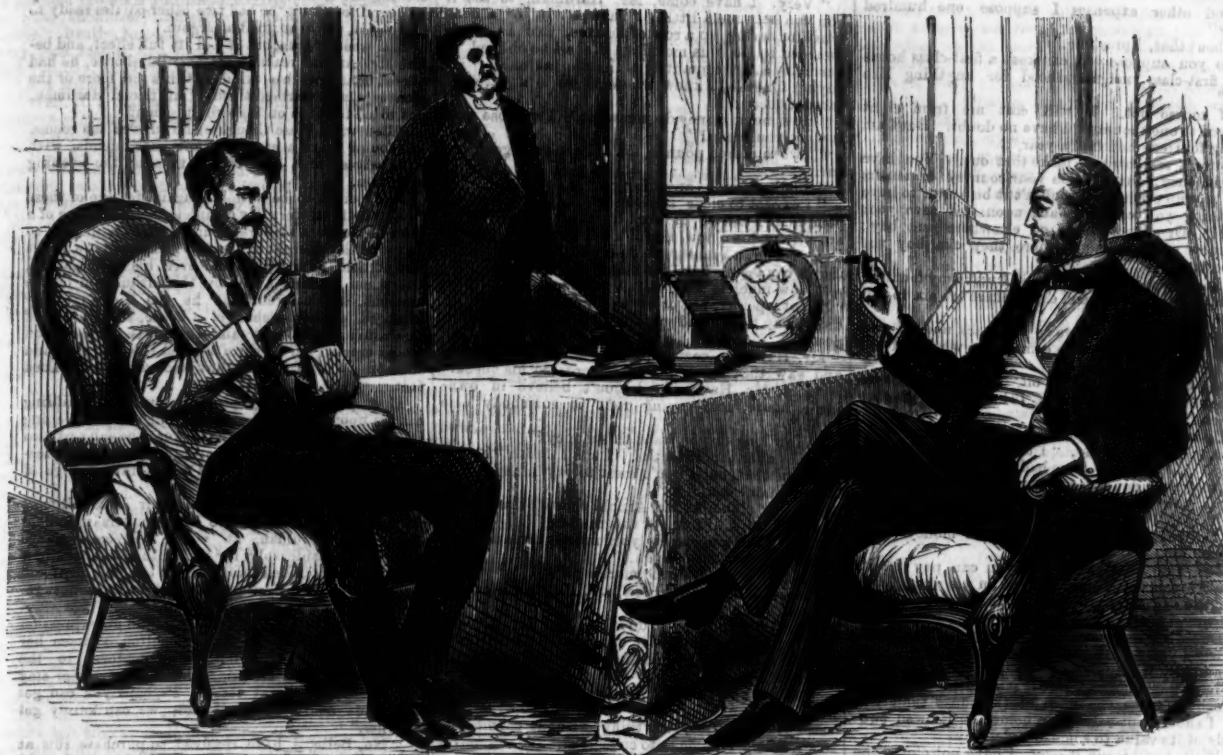
"My influence?" said John Verner, huskily.

"Yes, a master of the Grange, you possess enough to return as member for the borough. I am a little ambitious—it is a great weakness from which I have been free up till now—but when I see such shallow, ordinary men—nothing personal, my dear Mr. Verner—making their way in the world I feel that I ought to do something; and so I have decided to be a Member of Parliament."

John Verner stared at him with dazed and bewildered eyes.

"And this is the man whom I thought a weak-minded, lazy idiot!" he thought, and he groaned inwardly at the dreadful mistake. "I am in your power," he said, almost gnashing his teeth. "How and by what means you found this—the information, I cannot surmise."

(To be continued.)



[MR. RENSON IS ANNOUNCED.]

TRUE WORTH.

CHAPTER I.

Two gentlemen are seated in the elegant library of the fine mansion owned and occupied by Mr. Hardman, in one of the great thoroughfares which cross the city from river to river.

The room is handsomely and appropriately furnished. Oak-panelled paper, frescoed ceilings, oaken book cases filled with standard works, oaken arm-chairs of the most luxurious shape and pattern, and even the carpet was of a colour to match the rest of the apartment.

The month was April 18—: the weather so pleasant and mild, fires were unnecessary, and the occupants of the room were seated, each in his arm-chair, enjoying a fine Havana and engaged in intimate and friendly conversation.

Mr. Hardman, the elder of the two, was one of the merchant princes of the city—one who had amassed a very large fortune by frugality, industry, strict integrity, and a rigid adherence to rules and principles, which, having laid down at the commencement of his career, were never swerved from in his after years.

Having lived thus himself, he felt that any one possessing common sense enough to know right from wrong, could accomplish as much as he had done, and he was rather inapt to overlook any deviation from the rules upon which he had so successfully practised, and which had brought to him honour and esteem from all classes, and a fortune, which, being invested with great sagacity, yielded an income sufficient for more than his wants, and ample enough to justify any luxury in which he might choose to indulge.

His companion, Robert Arnold, was some twelve or fourteen years the junior of the two. A pleasant, lively, active, bustling man, well meaning in all things—credulous to a fault, and hopeful even to folly, for a single ray of sunshine in his path was to him the dawning of an era of prosperity.

He was recently established in business, having formed a good connection with a couple of salesmen from establishments similar to that in which he had been engaged for many years, and, having a special partner who had invested twenty-five thousand pounds, his prospects were certainly very flattering; indeed, the business of the first year had prospered so far beyond his expectations, he was in the highest spirits.

"And so you have really bought the house?"
"Why, not exactly bought it, but I am to give a positive answer to-morrow. I wouldn't conclude the bargain without consulting with you. Now, what do you say?"

"How much are you to give for it?"
"Three thousand."

"And how much down?"
"Only five hundred—the other two thousand are to stand—one thousand for three years, and the balance for an unlimited time."

"Don't you think it would be as well to hire? You could get a house large enough for your family for less than the interest of this one you talk of purchasing."

"Oh, no; how wildly you talk!"
"Come, let us see. Seven per cent. on three thousand is—"

"Ah, but you must not count that way for rent. Of course I don't count interest on what I pay down."

"You don't—very well—you may have to yet, so you may as well begin now. But come, leave that out of the question. The interest on the balance would be seventy-five pounds. Taxes and water rent make another twenty-five."

"Well, and you don't suppose I could hire such a house for two hundred and fifty pounds?"

"Perhaps not such a one, but surely one large enough and good enough for your family now."

"Oh, no; this is a fine brown stone front, in a first-class neighbourhood, and I am sure it will increase in value for some time to come. I am told by those who know that it is a real bargain."

"I see there is no use in my talking; but if you will buy, why don't you pay down more money now, and leave a smaller mortgage?"

"Oh, the seller don't care for any more at present, and I shall want the balance for my furniture and fixings."

"That is just what I am afraid of. The furniture and fixings in a first-class house, in a first-class neighbourhood, cost something, and you will find it out, if I am not much mistaken."

"I know that, Mr. Hardman, but a man ought to have a home, you know, some time or other in his life."

"A man ought to be able to pay for it before he has it; that's my doctrine, you know—pay as you go."

"Of course, that's the true rule; but then, you know, I can always sell this for more than as much as I give for it. But, tell me truly, what do you think of it?"

"Why, if you have any money you can spare from

your business, it is, perhaps, well enough to secure a home."

"I wouldn't purchase if I had not the means. My share of the profits last year was nearly fourteen hundred pounds."

"Well, that's encouraging, I must say. But don't you think it would be much better to allow that fourteen hundred pounds to remain in your concern and increase its capital than to take it, or any portion of it, to purchase a house? You had better hire for a year or two."

"Upon my word, Mr. Hardman," said Arnold, half smiling, and half vexed, to encounter so many objections to a scheme upon which he had set his heart, "I can't agree with you. I think a man is justified in enjoying all the comforts he can procure with the money he earns."

"Ah, well! I see," said his friend, noticing the slight cloud on his companion's face, "you are bent on purchasing, but if you do, my advice is to pay at least two-thirds down, and have the mortgage small."

"But how am I to get furniture unless I go in debt for it, and I don't want to do that?"

"And I don't want you to do that. Your family is so small now you need not furnish the whole house, and because you are going into a first-class neighbourhood that is no reason why you should have first-class furniture."

"But I must have things in keeping with my house."

"Oh, if it comes to must, there is no use of my saying any more, only I would advise you not to let so much stand on mortgage—when the money comes due you may find it difficult to pay—you know there must be dull seasons, Robert."

"Yes, but I don't dread them; we are well established, and I have a first-rate run of customers; besides, they will increase every season—for each of us attends to our business steadily."

"What rent do you pay for your office?"

"Six hundred pounds."

"That's a high rent, is it not?"

"Well, I don't know but it is, but it is a first-rate stand for business."

"You meant to say first-class, Robert, and then it would match your house. I really think as you have just begun, and don't know what may turn up in a year or two, you had better wait awhile; all the houses in London won't be sold in a year hence."

"Yes, but I don't believe I can get such another bargain."

"What does it cost to board your family now?"

"About three hundred a year, I think, all told."

"And other expenses I suppose one hundred more?"

"About that, I presume."

"Do you suppose you can keep a first-class house in a first-class neighbourhood for anything like that?"

"Of course not. It will cost me from eight hundred to one thousand. I have no doubt. But I am making fourteen hundred a year."

"I don't see how you make that out. You have made it once; but suppose your country customers don't pay up promptly, wouldn't it be better to have something you can fall back upon and save your credit? Or suppose they go elsewhere and buy; you know they will go where they can buy the cheapest goods."

"I know that very well, but if I make my fourteen hundred a year, and spend eight, there are six to fall back on."

"And suppose you have to fall back upon it, and your six hundred mortgage comes due, what will you do then?"

"Oh, that's three years off. If I can't save six hundred in three years, I had better give up business."

"Upon my word, Robert," said Mr. Hardman, speaking very earnestly, "I think you are acting rashly. Because you have had a good year's business, and have got a few hundreds ahead, you seem to think you must spend them right off."

"Oh, no, I am going to invest them. Surely you don't call it foolish to spend money on a house?"

"Yes, I do, till you are sure you can pay for it, and until you really need one. You are wrong, and mark my words, you will find it out yet."

"I am sorry you think so, but—"

"Don't say but. Board for a couple of years yet, and when you have saved enough to buy a house, buy and pay for it; give it to your wife, and then you have got a home. But it is no home as long as any other man owns more of the house than you do. I should not call this a home, if I owed two-thirds of its value to some one else."

"Well, I will think it over. I have not closed the bargain yet, and am not to give an answer until twelve to-morrow."

"Talk it over with your wife. Tell her what I say, and—"

"Oh, she always sides with you."

"You asked my advice, Robert—I did not volunteer," said Mr. Hardman, a little hurt at the tone in which the last remark was uttered.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Hardman, I did not mean anything by that remark: only I had made up my mind."

"Well, go home and unmake it as soon as possible," said his friend, laughing. "But mark my words, as sure as you buy that house and pay so little down, you will never pay the balance."

What folly to talk so! Didn't I just explain

The conversation was here interrupted by the servant, who entering, announced Mr. Benson.

"Tell him to come in," said Mr. Hardman. "Sit still, Robert. I want you to see this man; perhaps you may learn something from him;" and as Mr. Benson entered, Arnold wondered what he could possibly gain in the way of information from such a man.

Mr. Benson was a young carpenter, who had only been in business for himself about three years, but he had acted ever with such promptness and integrity as to command the good will of every one for whom he had worked, and from none more sincerely than from Mr. Hardman, whose warehouse he had fitted up.

Benson was educated much more thoroughly than many mechanics, and he found a decided advantage in that circumstance; for being enabled to calculate to a nicety, he had been enabled to secure some handsome jobs, by underbidding older and more experienced men, who wondered how he could make money at such rates.

But he did make money, and what proved better than money to him, he made friends.

Mr. Hardman, who had awarded to him the fitting up of a very large warehouse, took a great interest in him.

He saw him superintending everything himself, and not afraid to show his journeymen an example of faithful industry.

This pleased Mr. Hardman, who, when he paid his last instalment, told him that if he ever needed a friend he might call on him.

"Good evening, Benson," he said cordially, as the visitor entered; "sit down. How are the folks at home?"

"Thank you—all very well," said Benson, seating himself with perfect self-possession, and encouraged by the frankness of his reception.

"Well, Benson, how go matters with you? Busy now?"

"Very. I have come, Mr. Hardman, to see if you can help me a little. I have put in for a contract for fitting up a row of houses, and as it was awarded to me this morning, I shall be obliged to purchase a large quantity of lumber at once. By buying for cash, I know where there is a parcel I can get cheap."

"How much money do you want? I suppose that is what you mean?"

"Two hundred pounds, sir. I can give good security."

"Shall you make anything on the contract?"

"I expect to clear something like two hundred pounds, if I can go to work right away, as wages are a little down now, and if I can get this lumber. I can give you a mortgage on my house as security, if you can let me have the money."

"How much is there on it now, Benson?"

"Not a penny, sir; or I would not offer it you. I didn't buy till I could pay for it, and it is my own now."

Mr. Hardman cast a passing glance at Arnold, and saw that a very faint flush crossed his cheek.

"Yes, Mr. Hardman, I don't believe in owning a house, and paying rent to somebody else for it."

"How long do you want this money?"

"Not over three months. I shall finish the job inside of that, but I don't want to pay interest any longer than I can help."

Another glance at Mr. Arnold showed that he appreciated the full force of this remark.

"Well, Benson, give me your note at three months, and I'll discount it for you."

"Shall I see you in the morning?"

"No. Make the note now, and I'll draw a cheque for you."

It did not take long to do this, and Mr. Benson, with an earnest profession of thanks for the timely assistance so promptly rendered, received his cheque and took his leave.

"Now, I like that man," said Mr. Hardman, as he heard the front door close. "He will be a rich man yet. He never does anything without calculating to a fraction how he is to come out, and he never goes beyond his depth."

"Ah, but he did this time. He had to come to you to borrow money to purchase lumber for this contract."

"Yes, but if I had not loaned it to him, he could have gone to any insurance company, and procured the money on his house. Didn't you hear him say it was all paid for?"

"Yes," said Mr. Arnold, colouring slightly, but making no further remark on that subject. "You seem to take a fancy to that man," he continued, evidently desiring to divert attention from himself.

"Well, I do. I saw him first when he commenced for himself. He hired a lot just above me in this street, and as I passed to and fro, I always saw him at work, early and late. I have seen him at work many a time before his men came, and after they had gone, and I made up my mind that he had the right stuff in him. I got him to finish my warehouse, and I advanced him money. I afterwards made some inquiries about him, and learned that he had always been prudent, economical, invariably saving something every week, so that when he married, he had saved up enough to buy and pay for a little cottage, which he purchased for a mere song. That cottage and lot are worth now five times what he gave for them, but he won't sell. He lives there contentedly—makes money, and is happy."

"Well, I see now what you mean by saying that I might learn something from him. I'll think it over about my house, and see you soon."

And after a few minutes passed in general conversation, the friends separated.

CHAPTER II.

MR. ARNOLD was not in the best humour with himself or his friend when he left the house; for, although he had gone there for the purpose of consulting and advising with him as to the purchase of the house, he was not exactly pleased to find so many objections raised—objections to which he had to yield the character at least of plausibility.

Mentally, he felt convinced that his friend had given him good advice, but he did not like it, for the reason that it ran counter to his wishes, when he had expected just the reverse from him, and he felt inclined to think Mr. Hardman somewhat censorious and over-particular.

On the road home he stopped at a cigar shop to replenish his stock, and, as luck would have it, stumbled upon the agent who had brought the house to his notice in the first place, and who was urgent to have him secure so great a bargain.

This gentleman was much pleased at the meeting, and immediately remarked that he intended to have written to him in the morning con-

cerning the house, because if he had not made up his mind to take it, he had two other parties ready to jump at it; it was so great a bargain.

This was not true, but it had its full effect, and before Mr. Arnold reached his boarding-house, he had almost made up his mind to think no more of the croakings, as he termed them, of his friend Hardman, but to act for once on his own judgment.

Filled with these thoughts, he entered his rooms, and found there a couple of intimate friends, with their wives, who had called to pass the evening with him.

Fate seemed to be with him again, for one of those friends had that very day completed the purchase of a snug house for a moderate sum, and he appeared so happy at the thought of having a home of his own that Mr. Arnold actually envied even his anticipation; but when, carried away by the enthusiasm of the moment, he declared that he too had that day arranged for the purchase of a house, the sparkle of his wife's bright eyes and the pleased expression which crossed her features assailed the business, and the house was on that instant resolved on as a fixed fact.

They passed a very pleasant evening, building castles upon the foundation of going to house-keeping in their own homes, and many were the snug parties arranged for the winter evenings, and the pleasant afternoons to be passed in an interchange of visits.

After his friends had taken their leave, Robert communicated to his wife the conversation he had with Mr. Hardman, at which her countenance elongated considerably, for she, with a woman's true tact, had unbounded confidence in the judgment and experience of Mr. Hardman, as well as the utmost reliance on his well-trieved friendship.

"Well, Robert dear," she said, with an expression which showed that she was struggling between her own wishes and the desire to conform to the judgment of their friend, "had we not better stay here another year at least? Perhaps you can get the same house then; if not, we can surely get another."

"No, Belle, I have resolved to purchase this at once, even if I don't move into it. I daresay I could sell it immediately at an advance," though, to tell the truth, he hardly believed himself as he spoke; "such a bargain is not to be had every day and I won't lose the chance if I can help it."

"But Mr. Hardman, I am afraid, won't like it. You go to him for advice and then do exactly the reverse of what he counsels."

"Oh no; you put things in the wrong light, Belle. He only thought that if I was going to buy I had better pay more down at once. He did not object so much to my buying."

"But why don't you do as he says, then?"

"We must have something to furnish with—and the house must be painted and put in perfect order."

"Why, I thought it was in order now?"

"Oh yes, of course it is, but then as long as I am going to own it, I want to have it fixed to suit myself. No, I can't pay any more down without going in debt for my furniture, and I won't do that."

"No, that would not do, of course," replied his wife, very firmly, not perceiving how very little difference there was in reality between running in debt for a house or for its furniture. "Of course not, that I know. Mr. Hardman would condemn me; I declare I don't know what to do."

He felt a slight twinge of self-reproach at the disregard of Mr. Hardman's excellent advice; he asked his wife, and told her to make up her mind to go to house-keeping as soon as he could get the house in order.

It was then arranged that they should remain where they were until everything was in readiness for their removal, and meantime they would keep their own counsel, and not say a word to any of their friends on the subject, for it was intended, as soon as they were settled, to surprise them by an evening party in their own house.

The next morning, half-an-hour before the time appointed, Mr. Arnold was at the brokers', and, having signed the necessary papers, he drew a cheque for one hundred pounds as a deposit, and went his way rejoicing to his warehouse.

If he had only waited—but no matter—let things speak for themselves.

As he was moving onward, with his head very high in the air, he felt already the ease, dignity, and consequence attaching to a house owner; he was accosted by an old friend, who could not help laughing outright at the expression of Arnold's face.

"What are you laughing at?" he inquired.

"Why if you could have seen your face as I saw it then, I think you would have laughed too; what have you been doing?"

"Nothing to laugh at, Frank. I have just bought a house."

"Oh, that accounts for it. Really, you looked as

if you had the care and responsibility of the country on your shoulders, and after all it was only our house. Really, Robert, I hope you will never be a very rich man if one house affects you so. When did you buy, and from whom?"

"Not ten minutes ago, and from Mr. Martin."

"Well, if I had met you ten minutes sooner, I could have given you some good advice."

"As how?"

"Why, by telling you that if you had gone to the owner of the house, you could have got it for two thousand two hundred pounds; it will cost you over five hundred pounds to put it in order."

Mr. Arnold looked rather incredulous, but his friend continued:

"I know this, Bob, for I know of one at least to whom it was offered, and who refused it because it would cost, at the lowest estimate, two hundred pounds to put it in decent order."

"But I went through every part of it. I am sure it looks to be in excellent condition."

"You were not brought up as a builder, I believe?"

"Not exactly."

"Well, my friend had it thoroughly examined by a builder, and that was what he said. But it isn't so bad after all. It's a fine growing neighbourhood, and I have no doubt that in a year or two the rise in property there will more than make you whole for all you have to spend."

Arnold's countenance brightened up a little at this, but he was a little, a very little vexed at the broker who had managed to get two hundred pounds out of him more than the owner asked for the house.

However, he made up his mind to be more careful hereafter.

It was too late now to remedy it, and what "could not be cured must be endured."

And so the house was bought, and great was the rejoicing of husband and wife when the act was consummated.

They fairly ached to speak of it among their friends, but true to their promise to each other, they forebore, fully resolved to have a grand time when they moved in, and receive their friends in their own house for the first time.

On the first of May, in accordance with the custom much more honoured in the breach than in the observance, the occupants of the newly-purchased house moved out, and Arnold and his wife were afforded an excellent opportunity of examining their bargain.

To say that their faces elongated considerably would be but to say small portion of the truth.

At first they were sad, then mortified, and they wound up by getting decidedly angry.

The house had been built to sell, and being handsomely furnished at the time of purchase looked to be in perfect order.

But now, with empty rooms and bare floors, all the glaring defects were plainly visible.

The floors were laid with the most common pine, and very unevenly at that.

The surfaces were shrunken, and in many places loose.

The window frames jarred, and the windows would scarcely open, or shut when opened.

But the house was theirs, and they must make the best of it.

With something very like a qualified oath, Arnold locked the front door, and put the key in his pocket, and telling his wife to go home, he started for Mr. Benson; for he knew that he would give a correct estimate as to the sum needed to put the house in order.

Mr. Benson was not in, but leaving the key with his foreman, Mr. Arnold requested that he would go around and make the necessary examination and estimates, letting him know the result as early as possible.

The next morning Arnold received the required document from Mr. Benson.

It was in black and white, and there could be no mistake.

It footed up two hundred and nine pounds for actual necessary repairs.

Then it must be painted, which would cost more, at least, according to the plan and designs he had adopted.

He grumbled terribly at the imposition which had been practised on him; but biding up his wrath, he made up his mind to pocket the loss, and say nothing about it.

Mr. Benson received directions to go on with the repairs at once; the painting was commenced, and in two weeks his house was ready for occupancy; and to tell the truth, when this was all completed, the house looked so well, and so comfortable, Arnold fancied he had not made such a very bad bargain after all.

The furnishing was commenced, and by the time it was finished, Arnold found that not only was his

cash, which he had left after the payment on the house, gone, swallowed up by his repairs, painting, and furniture, but he had given out notes for four hundred more, on account of furniture, which he was obliged to procure on time, or go without.

True, it was not absolutely necessary, for his parlours would have looked very well in the summer without the splendid curtains, but then they would have to be bought at some time, and he might as well have them now as ever—and they were had.

But to leave these details, the house was completely and elegantly furnished, and it was with emotion of pride and happiness, Robert Arnold hailed his wife as she entered the elegant parlours as the mistress of her own house.

The children (for they had two, Robert and Ida) were frantic with delight; for after being penned up in one room in a boarding-house all their lives, the freedom of this beautiful mansion, with its many and elegant rooms, was luxury which they could well appreciate, and the happy parents participated in their joy.

On the evening of the day which saw them for the first time occupants of their own house, Robert and his wife paid a call on Mr. Hardman; and while Belle was in the parlour with Mrs. Hardman and the children, Robert found his way to the library, where Mr. Hardman was seated, looking over some accounts.

"So you've done it, Robert?" was his salutation, pointing to a seat, which Mr. Arnold took, with a laugh not at all hearty.

"Why, how did you know it? Belle and I agreed not to say a word about it until everything was done, and then we were to have you and your family around at tea."

"Benson told me. A precious bargain you have made, Robert. If you had sent Benson there before you purchased, you might have saved some hundreds."

"Oh, well, that can't be helped now. I did put my foot in a little, but I think I shall know better next time. Really, Mr. Hardman, now it is fixed and furnished, it is an elegant house, and worth all I have paid on all hands."

"Now, we want a promise from you to keep yourselves disengaged next Friday evening. We are to have some friends to warm our new house, but without you there would be no real pleasure. You will come?"

"I have all these things to my wife. Of course, if she has no engagement she will be there, and I will come around during the evening."

Knowing Mr. Hardman's peculiar dislike to large companies, Arnold was glad to have obtained this promise, and after a pleasant evening, they returned to their own house.

(To be continued.)

THE SPOILED CHILD.

CHAPTER V.

LOTTIE ROPER sat in her dressing-room one cold morning, about three years after her marriage.

The millionaire had not scrupled to lavish money upon the adornment of his home. The room was furnished luxuriously and expensively, and the mistress' toilette was in keeping with her surroundings.

The air was warm, balmy and hushed as that of a summer's eve, and the faint, wintry sunshine was coloured into a semblance of solstitial glow by the pink hangings.

Lottie needed pink and rose-coloured draperies now, in the morning, and by gas-light, a soupçon of rouge, to supply the absence of her once brilliant bloom. She was beautiful yet, but her skin was pale as alabaster and her eyes had a sad, vacant look when her features were in repose, that told painfully of thwarted purposes and an empty, weary heart.

They were full of tears now—sometimes trickling heavily down her face—then wiped away that she might view more clearly a tiny picture she held—a miniature painted upon ivory, and surrounded by pearls—the likeness of an infant, with large, brown eyes, a ripe, red mouth, pearly-fair complexion and red hair.

"If my boy had lived! if my boy had been spared to me!" she murmured, passionately, pressing the lifeless presentment to her lips. "Life would not then have been so dreary a blank! But I have nothing to live for—nothing!"

She rocked back and forth in her woe agony as keen and inconsolable as the grief of the peasant Rachel, who bemoans in her clay—but the children that are not!

The ringing of the door-bell did not penetrate to

her retreat, and it was not until a warning knock at her door aroused her from her mourning, that she knew a visit was in store for her. She recognized the subdued double knock, given by a gloved hand, unlike a servant's respectful rap, and arose to unlock the door. Outside, as she had expected, was Aunt Mockridge.

"Good-morning, my dear!" said the senior matron, beginning, before she seated herself, to loosen the clasps of her sable cloak. "How very warm you keep your rooms! Is not that one reason why you suffer so much from languor?"

"Is it warm?" asked Lottie, listlessly. "I had not noticed it." And she pulled the cord of a ventilator. "How are you, to-day?"

"Very well. I am never sick, and I attribute my health, in a great measure, to my active habits. I walked all the way from home this morning, in preference to riding. Not a day passes without my going out for an airing."

Seeing that her niece paid no attention to the hint she designed to convey, she abandoned the circuitous path and went straight at her object.

"There is no question in my mind, Lottie, but that your health and complexion would both be vastly benefited by out-door exercise. It is a source of much anxiety to me, and, I can see, to Mr. Roper, also, that you no longer take that interest in your personal appearance that you used to do. It is bad policy in a married woman to let herself run down. It diminishes her influence, and importance in the world, and, what is of nearly as much consequence, weakens her hold upon her husband. People in Society like to be amused and to look at pleasing objects, and men value their wives according to the éclat they reflect upon themselves. I could wish, for your sake and that of your friends, that you would exert yourself to overcome your depression, and to be the shining figure in your circle that you were three—yes! two years ago."

"My friends!" echoed Lottie, drowsily. "Where are they?"

"I know no woman who could have more if she would take the trouble to attract them. He who would have friends, must show himself friendly!" said Mrs. Mockridge, impressively. "No one with your gifts of mind and person and the prestige of your husband's wealth, need be without troops of admirers and intimates."

"Bought with my husband's money! I am better off, friendless and lonely-hearted as I am, than I would be surrounded by a thousand such!"

"My dear Lottie, are you aware that it is sinfully ungrateful in you to talk in that strain when you have an indulgent husband who spares no pains to please you—no expense, that he may contribute to your happiness?"

Lottie's lip curled.

"You do not appreciate him—you never did!" continued Aunt Mockridge, displeased at this mute but significant reply to her encomium upon the underrated Josiah. "I have said this from the first. You never had a just conception of the prize you had drawn."

"Perhaps not!" answered Lottie, moodily.

It was clear that she required further stirring up.

"If you have no regard for what the world says—no consideration for your husband's feelings and wishes, at least try to show that you are not selfishly unthankful for what I have done for you. I do not like to parade my good deeds. You have never heard me allude to your obligations to me until now; but you cannot forget that but for me you would still be living unknown, neglected—a rustic drudge, in the cheerless farm-house where I found you—"

"And where I wish you had left me!" retorted Lottie.

If her aunt were driven to use of strong language, she was ready to meet her with the same. Not perceiving or not caring that her censor was struck speechless by the audacious ingratitude of the rejoinder, she continued:

"I believe that you meant well; that your aim was to advance me in the world and to secure what you thought was my real welfare. I do not censure you for my unhappiness, for I know how much of it is to be attributed to my own wicked folly and madness. I have never uttered a complaint of my husband in your hearing or to any other living mortal. I had no right to expect affection from one whom I did not—whom I could not love—but kind treatment—simple humanity—I did hope to receive, and I have been his bond-slave—the one being whom he could insult with impunity; degrade with-

out fear of resistance; stab to the heart whenever it suited his royal pleasure, and have no one ask why he did it. All this I could bear—all this, and much, much more, I have borne. But it was tenfold harder to be separated from the only creatures upon earth whom I loved and who dearly loved me, with all my faults. The only righteous motive that urged me to marry Josiah Roper was the hope of, through him, relieving the poverty of my parents, giving them a more comfortable home in their old age, and providing some more profitable avenue of labour for my brothers. You know, even while you extol his indulgence to me, that he has never suffered me to see my old home since he had the right to control my actions, and that when my father and mother, (Heaven forgive me!) by my lying reports of my happiness, and pining for a sight of their child, ventured to visit that child in her own home, they were met by such manifest contempt, such heartless inhospitality and ungentlemanly jeers, that their honest pride revolts at the thought of repeating their visits, or allowing one of their household to cross Mr. Roper's threshold!"

Aunt Mockridge had regained voice and self-possession by the time this sadly-bitter recital was over.

"There were many allowances to be made for Mr. Roper," she said. "Allowances which you and I, as women who know the world, ought to understand. Men, now-a-days, dislike nothing more than marrying an entire family, and your relatives are really so needy that it would be a tax upon his resources were he to undertake the support of them all."

"That consideration need not prevent my sending my sisters a cast-off garment from my too-abundant supply!" interrupted Lottie. "He forbids my giving them so much as a ragged pocket-handkerchief or a pair of old shoes, and he watches me continually lest I should transgress his rule. It would not have been a ruinous draught upon his purse if he had spoken a word to one of the many men who would be glad to do him a favour, and thus secured a clerkship—or, if nothing better, a porter's place—for James and Dickey. You are generous with your means, aunt," she added, in a softer tone. "I do not forget your munificence to me, or your welcome gifts to my brothers and sisters. Do not attempt to defend unfeeling illiberality in another. Is it any comfort to me to flaunt in silks and velvets while my poor mother has but one Sunday dress, and that of a material my kitchen maids would scorn to wear?—to lie on a soft lounge and fold my hands in idleness the live-long day, while my darling Lizzie plies her needle in the short intervals of ease afforded her between spasms of distracting pain? I had rather beg my bread at your door, if I might do it honestly, than live in luxurious ease as Josiah Roper's legal, but not on that account the less degraded mistress!"

"You are not in a humour to listen to reason to-day," responded Mrs. Mockridge, in what the lord of the mansion would have called a "business-like" voice. "My object in calling this forenoon was to ask if you were going to the reception at Mrs. Hargrove's to-morrow night?"

"Aunt!"

"Well, Lottie—what is it?"

The shocked face and tone produced no apparent effect upon the imperturbability of the catechist.

"You forget that my baby has been dead just five months!" said Lottie, glancing down at her mourning wrapper.

"A longer period of seclusion than etiquette demands after the death of an infant not six months old!" rejoined the elder lady, quietly.

"Oh, aunt! you have had children of your own and lost them!" Lottie's eyes flamed through the gathering tears. "Do not kill me by speaking so coldly of my sweet angel! Had he been five—ten—twenty years old, his death could not have been a greater sorrow! He was all I had to love—all! all!"

"This is very wrong, Lottie! You have sat here, day after day, and brooded over your trouble until you have become nervous, hysterical, dyspeptic—I might almost say, partially insane." Aunt Mockridge spoke like one who saw her duty and meant to perform it without more temporising, as her niece's heavy sobs offended her decorous ears. "It is time that your friends interfered and prescribed authoritatively what course you should pursue. And, since you have dwelt upon your disappointment in the result of your marriage, let me remind you that you are not the only one who has a right to complain. You married for position, for

wealth, and the means of enriching your family. Your husband thought that he had won a wife who would suitably adorn the high station to which he had raised her. Judge of his chagrin at seeing you degenerate into a whimsical invalid! I had hoped and believed that you had more strength of mind."

She paused, but there was neither motion nor reply, and she deployed her heavier artillery into line.

"Do you know what will be the general report before another week passes, if you do not show yourself at Mrs. Hargrove's? What is already engaging malicious tattlers' minds, in anticipation of your selfish persistence in your seclusion? They say that you dare not meet Mrs. Hargrove's nephew and his bride—that you have never overcome your infatuation for that unprincipled jilt!"

"As if I cared!" was the languid response.

"If you do not care, your husband does, and he has reason to feel strongly upon this subject?" Aunt Mockridge marched her battalion steadily forward. "I do not wonder that he has determined, for the honour of his name, to protect your reputation and silence an uncharitable world, to insist upon your facing your old lover, and by your congratulations and unconcerned demeanour quieting slanderous whispers for ever."

"He has determined—did you say?" interrogated Lottie, bewildered. "I have heard nothing of it."

"Because he wished to effect his purpose as quietly and with as little annoyance to you as possible. I must say that he has manifested much tact and delicacy in his proceedings. Your dress is ordered—pure white silk, with pale lavender trimmings relieved by black lace—very tasteful second mourning, for he sympathises with your grief, while he cannot but deprecate your unseasonable indulgence in it. The robe and head-dress will be sent home to-day, together with an entirely new and exceedingly chaste set of pearl ornaments—subject to your order, should you desire any alteration in the dress or jewels. And"—more earnestly, as Lottie's lips were compressed and her pale cheek flushed—"let me beg of you, my child, to avoid an open rupture with Mr. Roper! He is a man of very decided character, and he is resolved upon this step. The utmost concession he would make when I expressed to him my fear lest you should feel disinclined to accede to his wishes in this affair, was that I might inform you what these were. I have acted, throughout, as your true friend; solicitous to spare you pain whenever I could, and to persuade you wherein lay your wisest and safest policy."

There was no doubting the sincerity of this last asseveration, and Lottie showed that she appreciated it, after a moment's struggle.

"I believe you, and am grateful! You have spared me a sad, and it may be a terrible scene. If Mr. Roper has decreed that I should do this violence to my feelings and the sense of respect I owe the dead, I understand far better than you can possibly do the uselessness of resistance. Let him have his way! What signify a few pangs more or less when my life is a continual pain?"

On the second day after this interview, the kind aunt again presented herself in Mrs. Roper's dressing-room.

Lottie lay upon the sofa, very pale and evidently suffering from weariness and depression. Aunt Mockridge had never been so heartily affectionate before in her looks and language.

She congratulated her niece upon her brilliant appearance at the reception-party; the elegance of her toilette and dignified suavity of deportment; retailed the compliments she had heard paid to her, and after condoling with her upon the nervous prostration succeeding the unwonted excitement, wound up by declaring it to be her solemn conviction that she would find in the assurance of fulfilled duty and the consciousness that she had conferred happiness upon her husband and friends, abundant recompense for whatever sacrifice the effort might have cost her.

"It was a favourite saying of your dear mother's—one which I have often repeated to you—that the path of right was in the end the easiest, as it was the surest way to abiding peace," she went on to say, and Lottie, apathetic as she was, remarked that her tone was less even than it had been. "And that reminds me, my love—when did you hear from her?"

"I had a letter from her about a fortnight since," returned Lottie, sighing. "They are poor correspondents this winter—Lizzie and all of them. I suppose they begin to think that I am alienated from them; that I have grown indifferent and forgetful,

although I write regularly once a week—and I cannot blame them for misjudging me!"

"You spoke of Lizzie. How was she?"

"Better than she had been for months, mamma said, and Lizzie added a postscript—cheerful and loving, as all of her letters are. Dear Lizzie! how she longed to see my boy—and she never did!"

"It is unusual for her to continue comfortable for so long a time, is it not?"

"Yes; and it encourages me to hope. What is it, Philip?" to a servant who showed his face at the door.

"There's a young man down stairs, ma'am, who insists upon seeing you, although I told him you were not at home, and"—hesitatingly—"he says he is your brother."

"My brother!" Lottie's eyes sparkled as she started up from her pillows. "Show him up immediately!"

It was James Garland, and the sight of his sorrowful face changed his sister's exclamation of joy into a half scream of apprehension.

"Oh, James! what has happened?"

The young man had not offered to take a seat, but stood like a stone figure, when Lottie threw her arms about his neck, every lineament set in mournful sternness.

When she spoke, he put her off from him and looked searchingly into her eyes.

"Nothing that you ought not to be prepared for by the letters we have sent you within the past week! You would not come to her on her death-bed, although she prayed constantly that she might see you once more! I am here to invite you to Lizzie's funeral!"

The cry that rang through the room was one to haunt the ears of the listeners for many a day. James caught his sister's lifeless form as she was falling backwards.

"You were too abrupt—too harsh!" said Aunt Mockridge, applying restoratives after Lottie had been laid upon the sofa. "She knew nothing of her sister's illness. I only heard of it myself this morning, and was about to break it to her when you came in. Stand back, out of sight! she is reviving!"

As James retreated to the door he stumbled over some one who was just entering.

"You trod upon my foot!" said Josiah, with a strong expression. "What's the row here!"

Lottie was still extended upon the sofa, her face hidden in the cushions, her frame convulsed by deep, tearless sobs.

Josiah was very white and his eyes looked scared. In his hand were four letters.

"Here, Lottie!" he said, more mildly than he had spoken for many a day. "I had no idea, even after reading these, that there was any danger. For, you see, she had been ailing, off and on, for so many years—and a creaking door hangs long on the hinges, you know. I wish you wouldn't take on so disagreeably!"

Aunt Mockridge pulled him to the other side of the room, interpreting more readily than he could the gesture of aversion which told that Lottie was conscious of his presence.

"When did it happen?"

"Last night, about ten o'clock! The funeral takes place the day after to-morrow."

"She must go!" said Mrs. Mockridge, decisively.

"The story would not tell well if you kept her away, especially after suppressing the letters."

"I meant she should have them to-day!" muttered Roper, crossly.

"They are all in affliction now!" replied the diplomatist. "Listen to my plan! I will go with Lottie. We can hire a carriage and keep it until after the funeral. Then, I should advise you to let her stay at her father's for a week or so, until her mind is somewhat calmed down. She is hardly a responsible being just now, and if she should return sooner she would be troublesome here. Her mother is a sensible woman, and I pledge my word that she will send her back to you more contented than she has ever yet been. It is a principle of mine that public scandal should always be avoided when it is practicable to do so, and if Lottie goes abroad in her present nervous state stories will circulate."

So Lottie was allowed to go in a hired carriage, without footman or liveried coachman or even lady's maid, to the house of mourning.

"She was the good angel—the beneficent genius of the family, and not I!" said Lottie. "Mother! what a miserable, miserable failure my life has been! If I could but stay with you!" she sobbed,

when the hour of separation came. "This dear home of love and peace will seem like a lost Paradise to me when I am back again in the hateful whirlpool of gay life. Mother, dear! can I ever be good and useful there?"

"Yours is a sad lot, my darling!" The mother held her to her heart as if she would keep her there for ever. "But light may shine even upon him, by-and-bye. I will pray for thee that thy faith fail not!"

In her simplicity, she had but an imperfect realization of the fiery ordeal to which that little stock of faith was to be subjected; refused to admit the fear that the happiness of her best-beloved child was wrecked beyond hope of recovery.

It was not for Josiah Bopar's wife to say whether she would or would not act the part he prescribed in the gaudy drama of gregarious folly which he conceived to be the highest development of social life.

A tinselled, smiling automaton she must remain while he is her owner and ruler; while her worn and weary heart would fain be sleeping its last, dreamless slumber beside the graves of her sister and her baby-boy.

THE END.

EXILED FROM HOME.

CHAPTER XLVII.

AFTER a week or two, the old squire, aged by troubles rather than by years, shut himself up in his library and saw no one.

His old neighbours, who had been his warm friends years before, called upon him to welcome him home again, but he refused to see them.

He was more misanthropic than ever, a grim, harsh old man, with a dictatorial manner, without human interest, esteeming no man above another, caring for nothing, living only because he must live, but looking forward to death as to the laying down of an insufferable burden.

Whether beneath that stony seeming was a capacity for hopes and fears, for suffering and for happiness, was a question none could solve.

He announced immediately after his return that he should go away again in June, to spend the remainder of his life abroad.

No arguments that his lawyer could use could ever move him from this purpose.

His stay at Lomemoor, short as he intended to make it, became very soon monotonous in the extreme.

He arose at a certain hour, breakfasted, rode to Penistone, closeted himself with his books or papers, lunched, dined, and went to bed. He saw no one but his servants, his lawyer and his bailiff.

His return to the old house with its haunting memories had a bad effect upon his health. Hard and grim as he was, his heart was very sore. He had loved his daughter as the apple of his eye. He had been proud of her, and she had wrecked his love and pride in one fatal hour, and with them had wrecked his life. He hated her memory. She was the first of her name who had ever brought sorrow to her kindred, and she had been fairest of all her race.

And yet, often as he sat in the old library, he would start at the creaking of the stair, fancying that he heard her step again, and then he grow angry with himself for his folly, and scoffed at himself for it.

In the house she had made bright with her sweet presence, he thought more often of her in one week than he had thought of her before in months.

He never went into the drawing-room: she had loved to sit there.

He never went into her chamber: it was there that Gwen had been born.

But one day, when the thought of his lost daughter haunted him even more than usual, he rode over to Penistone, and, as if by accident, strolled into the churchyard.

He sought and found that dishonoured grave, with the name "Magdalen" upon its headstone, and stood by it, stern and awful, for a long time.

Then he returned home and shut himself in his library, whence he did not emerge till the next day.

During this retirement he fasted, and no one saw his face, or heard his voice.

It was a day or two after this visit to Penistone that he received Lord Chilton's letter, imploring him for Gwen's address.

We have, elsewhere, given the substance of the young viscount's letter.

It recounted all that Lord Chilton knew of Gwen;

it told of her beauty, her innocence, her sweetness, the purity of her nature, the grandeur of her character.

No one had spoken to the squire like this of his grandchild. He was amazed.

"The young serpent has completely charmed Lord Chilton," he thought. But even were she what he thinks, she is no fitting wife for a viscount, and I would wrong him in permitting him to marry her. If I knew her address, I would not give it to him!"

He was about to toss the letter aside, when his eye caught sight of the address mentioned in the postscript.

"He is visiting at Beechmont, the property of Miss Norreys," he said. "Miss Norreys? I wonder if she is any relation to my late wife? My brother-in-law, General Norreys, who lived in India nearly all his life, and died there a year or two ago, left a daughter. Her name, I believe, was Sicily. If this new owner of Beechmont is Miss Sicily Norreys, she is my niece by marriage, my wife's niece, in fact. I should like to see her before I leave England for ever. If she be the niece of my wife, as I believe, I will make her my heiress. She has as good a claim upon me as any other. I will go to Beechmont before I return to the Continent."

He looked the letter in his desk, and paid no more heed to it.

He forgot its assertions about Gwen, but thought often of its allusion to the owner of Beechmont, and the desire strengthened within him to see this Miss Norreys, and if she should prove to be the niece of his late wife, to make a will, devising and bequeathing to her his entire property.

A few days after the receipt of this letter, Miss Norreys' Hindoo servant appeared at Lomemoor.

At first thought, it would seem that Aga was especially disqualified for the mission entrusted to him.

Although he dressed after the English fashion, his countenance was unmistakably Eastern.

He could not hide his nationality under any disguise whatever, although he spoke the English language with astonishing fluency, and his manners and habits were English.

But, notwithstanding this disqualification, Aga was more than ordinarily shrewd and quick-witted.

Once upon a scent, he was like a blood-hound. Miss Norreys could not have entrusted her errand to safer or better hands.

He walked from Penistone in the early morning, and presented himself at the kitchen door of Squire Markham's house, offering to mend clocks, watches, crockery, and glass-ware, and asking humbly for his breakfast.

Meg hurried to Mrs. Quillet with his demand, and the housekeeper herself came out to see him.

Aga had a small leathern bag of tools in his hand.

He was respectably dressed, quiet, respectful, and altogether the impression he made upon Mrs. Quillet was favourable.

"You can come in," she said. "We have two clocks to repair, besides a pile of crockery to mend. If you can do it well, we've work enough to last you a day or two."

The Hindoo followed her into the kitchen, and thence to the servants' hall.

Breakfast was supplied to him. After the meal, he repaired the kitchen clock with such skill and celerity as to delight Mrs. Quillet.

She conducted him to her own room, and he performed a like service in a like manner, for her own clock, and was then sent back to the servants' hall to deal with the broken crockery.

Meg, the dairy maid, was deputed to attend upon him—in other words to watch him lest he should depart with the spoons or other valuables.

He produced from his bag a roll of hard white cement and called for a lighted lamp.

Then while he worked he talked to the girl, who was loquacious, and who did not hesitate to impart nearly all the knowledge she possessed to this polite heathen.

By the time dinner was placed before Aga, he had learned all that popular rumour was wont to declare concerning Gwen.

He was told of the mother who had come to Lomemoor and who had subsequently perished in a storm upon the moor, of Gwen's education, of her lovers, of her disappearance, and of the anxious inquiry that had been made after her.

It must be confessed, in justice to Meg, that all this had been elicited from her by judicious inquiry and hints, all so cleverly veiled that the girl herself supposed she was telling the story of her own accord.

In the afternoon, Mrs. Quillet came in to examine the work.

Finding it well done, she sat down and watched the process of doing it.

Then she questioned the Hindoo as to his home, how long he had been in England, and so forth, and he finally was induced to tell his story, which he did in this wise:

"I have been in England not quite a year, madam. I am searching through Yorkshire for an old country-house where a Miss Granger once lived as governess."

Mrs. Quillet started. "What do you want of Miss Granger?" she demanded.

"Miss Granger married an English curate," replied Aga, "and the pair were said to have gone out to China as missionaries. If they are in England they have it in their power to help me greatly. If I could find Miss Granger and her husband, I would give ten years of my life, lady."

"You want them to recommend you to people, or, introduce you as a lecturer, or as a collector of funds for your own people, I suppose?" said Mrs. Quillet. "But how did you ever hear or know of Miss Granger?"

"A lady from Paris told me of her," said the working Hindoo deviously as he talked. "The lady said that Mrs. Granger had been a governess many years, and had married a curate, and that they could assist me. The lady was a relative of Miss Granger," he added; "but had lost her address for some years."

Aga spoke with the utmost possible seeming innocence.

It is possible that he soothed his conscience with the assurance that all the descendants of Adam are relations, and that this conviction of his truthfulness gave him his tranquil smile and serene expression.

Mrs. Quillet was completely deceived by him. She questioned him further.

He talked religion in a manner that convinced her that he was a missionary among his own people, and that he sought Miss Granger's husband as a man seeks another of his own profession.

Mrs. Quillet was an unusually practical and shrewd woman.

A vast amount of credit must therefore be given the clever Aga for so completely hoodwinking her, for in spite of her sense she fell into the snare he had laid for her.

"Miss Granger used to be a governess in this very house!" she remarked.

"En!" ejaculated Aga. "In this house? Have I then found the place?"

"Yes," said the housekeeper, "she married a curate named Myner; Thomas Myner."

"And they are in China?"

"No, he was never a missionary, although he talked of becoming one. He obtained a curacy in London, but lost it after his marriage. He is now teaching a family school for boys in London, and his address is number 80, Queen street, Northumberland Terrace, Notting Hill."

She did not notice how the Hindoo's eyes gleamed under their black brows.

"Will you please write the address?" he asked meekly.

Mrs. Quillet complied, writing the address on a scrap of paper and giving it to him.

His object was gained. He placed the paper in his pocket, carefully hiding his jubilation.

When he entered the house he had not known in what manner he should gain success, but he had felt convinced that he would be successful.

His plan of procedure had been produced upon the spur of the moment, and his delight in its success was all the greater in consequence.

He finished his task that day, and at night departed on foot, as he had come, for Penistone.

And it was not until he was gone that Mrs. Quillet felt any misgiving in regard to him.

She sat down at once and wrote to Mrs. Myner about the Hindoo, and disclaimed all knowledge of him save that he had worked for her one day.

This letter was despatched in the next day's post, and went up to town in the same train that carried Aga.

But had he known it he would not have cared. All that he had wanted was the name and address of the former governess of Gwen, and that he had safe in his pocket-book.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THERE was no chance for flight, if Gwen had had strength to flee.

Her lover had found her out in the shadow of the fir-tree, and was looking eagerly down upon her face, half in incredulity, half in a joyous recognition.

Before she could command her thoughts, her brain was in a wild whirl, and her whole being divided between pain and joy, in that supreme moment. Lord Chilton caught her hands and drew her

forth from the shadow into a little patch of moonlight close at hand.

The pale gleams fell upon the massive waves of bronze-gold hair, upon her lovely Greek face, white now with great emotion, and into the up-turned eyes of purple panny hue, so full of entreaty, yearning, and deathless love.

"It is Gwen!" cried Lord Chilton, rapturously. "I have searched everywhere for you, my darling. Where have you hidden yourself all these months? Gwendoline, speak to me, darling."

He clasped her in a passionately tender embrace, raining kisses on her beautiful face, and Gwen submitted, conscious only of a vague wish that she might die now in his arms, in this moment of perfect joy.

The Maltese valet, with black gleaming eyes and bated breath, drew stealthily nearer the young pair, watching and listening.

The sudden aspersion, amounting almost to conviction, that he had found the outcast child of Constance Markham in "Miss Mynor," still held him in a sort of stupor.

Lord Chilton put the girl from him gently, gazed upon her features with passionate eyes, and drew her back to him in another transport of delight.

"It is really you, Gwendoline!" he ejaculated. "It is no dream—no fantasy—no mistake! Thank Heaven, I have found you at last!"

And still Gwen was silent.

"What have I not suffered in losing you, Gwen?" exclaimed her lover. "I was thinking of you the very moment when your movement among the shadows attracted my attention. To find you here and thus so marvellous, yet when I recognised you, when I found you under the tree, I was scarcely surprised. Gwen, speak to me. Why are you so silent?"

She drew away from him now, pale and shivering.

"I forgot, in the excitement of seeing you, all that I should remember," she said, tremulously. "No, do not touch me, Ronald. Do not touch me again!"

"What do you mean, Gwendoline?" demanded the viscount, in amazement.

"Have you forgotten how we parted?" asked Gwen. "Oh, Ronald—"

Lord Chilton drew her arm in his, in spite of the resistance she would have made, and led her away from the close vicinity of the ruins and from the possible neighbourhood of curious servants.

Pietro crept after them with the stealthiness of a cat.

The young viscount paused in a little moonlit glade, enclosed by trees, and then addressed his betrothed with a tenderness that was almost infinite, and with a love that shone from every feature.

"Gwen," he exclaimed. "I forgot that explanations are due to you. What must you think of me?"

"Nothing but what is good," interposed Gwen. "I never blamed you, Ronald. I told you to go away and think over your proposal, and that, if upon sober, second thoughts, you decided not to see me again, I should not blame you. Remember, I told you that! I did not expect you back, Ronald. I knew that I was no fitting mate for a viscount's son! How much better I know it now. I told you that if you did not come in the morning I should know that you had thought better of your proposal to me. And—you did not come!"

The last sentence was fraught with an intense anguish, and Gwen again strove to release herself from his grasp.

He let her go this time, and regarded her with a mingled joy and bitterness.

"And you believed that of me?" he exclaimed. "You thought that I went back to the shooting-lodge and calculated the length of your pedigree, contrasting it with mine? You thought me so cool of heart and head, so base—"

"Stop, Ronald. I thought you all that is noble and good. I never blamed you. I knew that I, a poor nameless girl, the child of an unknown vagrant woman, who lies to-day in Penistone churchyard in a dis honoured grave, was and am no fitting wife for Lord Chilton's son!"

How Pietro's heart leaped at those words!

Why, there could be no possible doubt upon the subject!

The girl was the missing Gwendoline Winter—and here under his very hands!

"Gwendoline," cried her lover, "hear me! I do not deserve what you have thought of me. I am not the base coward you have thought me. Hush! darling, do not protest. Listen to me. When I left Lonsmoor that night after our betrothal, I intended to seek you again early in the morning—"

"I know it. And I never blamed you, Ronald, for obeying the instincts of your race—"

"My poor little Gwen, my own darling, you cannot yet see your mistake! I never for one moment wavered in my allegiance to you. I never for one

moment desired to break our engagement. I have always loved and honoured you above all other beings on the earth—"

"But you did not come back!" said Gwen, sorrowfully.

"Hear my excuse. I returned to the shooting-lodge, and found there a telegram from our family physician, stating that my father had been stricken with apoplexy, and bid me lose no time in coming to him. That bidding was unnecessary. I never slept that night, Gwen. I walked the floor of my room. I wrote you a letter explaining my hurried departure, and the night dragged away. At day-break I rode over to Penistone and took the first train southward. I left my letter in the hands of my servant at the lodge, telling him to deliver it to you, and to follow me by a later train."

"I never received that letter, nor any letter from you, Ronald."

"I knew that afterwards. My servant, after my departure, set out for Lonsmoor to deliver the letter. He encountered young Orkney on his way to Lonsmoor also. Orkney recognized him as my servant, questioned him, learned of my departure, and of the letter to be delivered. He offered to take the letter to you himself, saying that he was about to call upon you. My servant gave the letter into Orkney's keeping, and turned about, proceeding to Penistone, thence southward by train. It was weeks afterwards, when you had disappeared, and no trace could be found of you, that my servant confessed to me the truth. I knew then that you had never received the letter."

"Orkney must have suppressed it. I never even knew that your father was ill, Ronald."

"I reached home in time to see him alive," said Lord Chilton. "My father lay for two or three days in a stupor. He revived sufficiently to know me and smile feebly, but he never spoke after his seizure. He died a week afterwards came his funeral. In my grief for him, I remembered you, my darling, but I was so occupied I had not time to write to you, and I had left a letter for you explaining my absence, so that I believed you knew all I would have said."

"If I had but received the letter!"

"As soon as I could, after my father's death, I hurried to Yorkshire, but you were gone—"

"I saw you at the station on my arrival in London. You drove in as I drove out in a cab. And you were then on your way to see me, Ronald?"

"Yes. The Quillets refused to give me your address. I searched for you in London, everywhere. I set men to search for you also. I found out young Orkney, watched him, and finally called upon him to learn if he had had your address. He had fallen into every evil way, but he told me that he had once met you in the street, months ago, in Netting Hill region, but that you had escaped from him, and that he had not been able to see you again. Had he not been intoxicated, he would not have told me this. I haunted Netting Hill thereafter, but I never found a trace of you. I wrote to Squire Markham lately, begging him to obtain your address for me from the Quillets and forward it to me here, but he has not answered my letter. Oh, Gwen, I was very hopeless to-night when I stood at the window. I began to fear that I should never find you!"

He put his arm around her yet more closely, and Gwen did not resist him.

"You are Lord Chilton now, Ronald, are you not?" she asked presently.

He replied in the affirmative.

"Then, more than ever, I am not fit to be your wife, Ronald!" she exclaimed. "You must marry in your own station in life. I have learned many lessons since we were at Lonsmoor, Ronald—and I shall never marry."

"That resolve I shall soon overcome," said Lord Chilton, smiling. "I have found you, Gwen, and I shall not let you go again. But tell me, darling, how is that you are at Dunholm Castle?"

"I am governess-companion to the Lady Georgina Charteris, Lord Darkwood's daughter," answered Gwen. "I am Gwendoline Winter no longer, Ronald. You know I had no right to that name—that is, that it was not mine by birth? When I left Lonsmoor, I went to London and to the house of my dear old governess, who is married to a very good man, formerly a curate, now a proprietor of a boys' school. They were very good to me, Ronald. They found me pupils in music, but after I encountered Chilton Orkney one day in the street I became frightened and dared not go out into the streets again alone. I knew he would watch for me, and I feared his insults. It was at that time that Lord Darkwood advertised for a governess for his daughter. I answered the advertisement. Mr. Sutton, his lawyer, came to see me, and the Myners recommended me for the situation. They desired me to be called by their name, urging me to start anew as their charge, and I came to Dunholm Castle as Marian Mynor, which is the name of my dear old friend and governess."

"Then you are the Miss Mynor of whom Miss Norreys told me?"

"The name," said Miss Mynor, "is not new to me."

"She was very earnest in her admiration of you, darling. She has fallen in love with you."

"And I love her, Ronald. She is the most beautiful woman I ever saw!" cried Gwen, enthusiastically.

"And the loveliest also! Oh, Ronald, I should be glad to have her for my friend."

"She is your friend now, Gwendoline. And when you become Lady Chilton you shall exchange visits with her to your heart's content. Do not tell me that you will not marry me. You belong to me, dearest. You must and shall be my wife. Look in my face. See, have I not suffered? Would you make me suffer more? Would you make my life one terrible blank as it would be without you? What are considerations of birth and fortune to me, who love you for yourself? And in yourself you have riches unspeakable. Your beauty, your nobleness, your sweetness, your spirit, your character—all these are wealth. I will not give you up—unless you have ceased to love me, Gwen."

The girl looked up into his face.

In the pale glow of moonlight, he looked years older than he had looked when she last saw him.

His features were sharpened, there were deep lines about his mouth, and care and sorrow had left their impress upon his face.

She saw that he had suffered more than words could tell—even as she had suffered.

How he loved her! After all, what were the distinctions of birth and fortune to those who loved as they did?

Why should the error of the dead be visited upon her innocent young head?

Why should she not yield to his persuasions and become his wife?

"Oh, Ronald," she cried, "you tempt me cruelly. But are you sure that your friends will never make you repent your love for me? Are you sure that you will never be sorry if I consent to marry you? I have had blood in me, and you may grow ashamed of it—"

"I deny that you have had blood in you," interrupted Ronald. "No one can look at you, Gwen, and believe that story. Your looks, your carriage, your very features, are all noble and aristocratic. I know that you have sprung from honorable people, Gwen; because your mother came to Lonsmoor, alone and craved, they have all thought her wicked. No one knew her name or station, except that she was a gentlewoman. Might she not have been an honoured wife who fled her home in a fit of insanity? Might she not have been an honoured widow, crazed by her husband's death?"

"I never thought she was other than the name on her tombstone declared her."

"I will have that stone, with its lying inscription, removed," said the young viscount. "I will make every effort to discover her real name and identity. But if I fail, Gwen, as I probably shall, for after all these years it will not be easy to discover her history, I shall still believe that your mother was an honourable gentlewoman, made insane by some misfortune. I shall still believe you of good family. We would be insane to believe otherwise. Do figs grow from thistles? Do grapes spring from thorn-trees? Do noble children come from ignoble parentage? No—a thousand times no!"

Lord Chilton held her captive a little longer, and then released her with tender words.

He declared that he should call upon her the next day and bring Miss Norreys with him. He desired a speedy marriage, which might be as quiet as she pleased, because he was yet in mourning for his father, but it must be immediate.

And so they parted in the little glade, and the young viscount watched with worshipping eyes the slight and graceful figure of his young betrothed, as she fitted across the quadrangle, and disappeared within the inhabited portion of the castle.

Then Lord Chilton slowly retraced his steps towards the ball-room.

When he, too, had disappeared, Pietro exulted within himself and muttered:

"I've found my game at last! Miss Gwendoline Winter has been six months within my reach and I did not know it! Lord Darkwood is in ignorance of the truth. Before he can know it, she must be beyond his reach and in my power! My Lord Chilton, I shall be obliged to spoil your little love affair. This girl must belong to me. She is my lawful game! Per Bacco! How am I to take possession of her? That's the question."

(To be Continued.)

The French Salon this year contains 4,033 works, divided as follows:—2,095 paintings; 934 drawings, miniatures, engravings, &c.; 622 pieces of sculpture, 44 medals and engraved stones, 76 architectural works, 237 engravings, and 25 lithographs.

CLIMBING PLANTS.

Climbing plants are exceedingly useful; they grow rapidly, produce an excellent effect, and are most advantageous in concealing bareness and crevices in conservatories or on dead walls. We do not despise them because they cannot stand alone, or because they have neither the strength nor nature of the forest tree, but we prize them for their qualities of beauty and gracefulness, and heartily admire their rank and luxuriance. In some such fashion it is also possible for us to contemplate, and even envy, those specimens of humanity that find in courts and high places the offices of climbing plants in a greenhouse.

Those who have claim to this title are generally men of no remarkable attainments, of no personal beauty, and boasting no exceptional charm of manner; yet they have gradually risen from mere nobodies (in common parlance) to be the favourite friend of kings, or the universally honoured guest in the most exclusive circles. Such a fact would almost appear a paradox; for it is generally supposed that the verdict of the world is, on the whole, uncommonly judicious, were it not of such everyday occurrence as almost to escape remark. A climbing plant springs up rapidly but it need not have a deep root. The favour of kings is precarious; the great thing is to attain it quickly.

The men who succeed as climbing plants are very often mediocre in mind, often poor in pocket, but they have certain talents of tact and adaptability which more gifted minds either want or despise. They have no violent dislikes or prejudices; the angles of originality have been so rubbed off that friction causes no disagreeable explosions of temper, no outspoken bitterness. They excite no fears, suspicions, or jealousies, for there is nothing in them that can excite anything but blank astonishment. When we see men without birth, family, or fortune, of indifferent attainments and vulgar habits, rise gradually over the heads of sober learning and quiet merit, we ask ourselves, is it only fools that command success? Not so. It is not folly, but want of self-love, that is the road to fortune. Men who are always riding a hobby become tedious; men of decided opinions weary us after a while; but the climbing plant lives in the serene atmosphere of petty hopes and fears in which all can share, and allows himself no decided views or independence of thought. If it is the fashion to play polo, skate, or gamble, he does so, not because he cares for it, but because it is the fashion; when fashion changes, so does he.

In order to grow tall quickly all extraneous development must be avoided; in like manner, those who wish to rise at court must avoid all intellectual pursuits, all striving after virtue and improvement, lest they should forget for one moment that favour which it is their sole aim to attain to. Both princes and the public are impatient of rivalry. Where they love, no other must dare to intrude, and the exigencies of family responsibilities, wealth, or position must incontinently be waived. This is of course easier with those who own the fewest claims on their time, and accounts frequently for the rise of obscure persons. Again, the advantages they receive from the company of the great are many. Lord Snooks, an impoverished earl, and Mr. Lovelace, a subordinate in the Foreign Office, are nothing if judged on their merits, and would obtain few invitations; were it not that the reflected splendour of royalty shines upon them and dazzles like a big gas lamp those who presume to look too closely. But in their borrowed plumage they are able to snub, annoy, and disgust those who do not pay them the attention they demand, and to enjoy the privilege, to vulgar minds so dear, of being stared at and envied.

THE SUN IS SET.

Such is my life now—a life of bitter retrospection, sad memories, and, worse than all, regret—ay, worse and more than regret, remorse—self-torturing, vain, useless remorse, the keen bitterness of which gives no rest either by night, or by day—always the same never-ending, weary pain, going back to the past that can never be undone.

And I sit alone, worn out and weary with weeping, my hands lying idle in my lap, looking out at the fast-falling rain pattering down thickly and steadily on the withered, sodden leaves which lie on the wet ground, an emblem of the end of all things—death.

The dreary depressing landscape suits my sad mood—the heavy white mist hanging over land and sea is like the cloud that has blotted out my happiness for ever.

Only one short year ago I was the happiest of the happy, the gayest of the gay; life seemed to me like one long, bright summer day, and the pleasure of the moment the only thing worth seeking after.

Now pleasure seems a mockery, and grief and melancholy, once but faint shadows, are a reality; while with sadness and sorrow I walk along life's road with tears that never cease to flow, for the old weary pain must always remain, a living regret that makes the aching heart swell nigh to bursting with the vain recollection of what might have been.

I am alone in my sorrow; never a stir in the great house, never a voice breaks the stillness that weighs like a pall upon my spirits, and I look out again through the window, out at the leaden sea, barely discernible through the mist and fog, and listen to the sob and moan of the hollow waves on the rocks below.

I think and think, going over the story of my life again, bit by bit, resting with a kind of tenderness on the happiness of the past, which seems all the brighter in contrast with the sorrow of the present; and, thinking of one evening in particular, it seems hard to realize that the gay, light-hearted girl of that night is now the sorrowful, broken-hearted woman sitting with eyes blinded by tears in the gathering gloom.

It seems so long ago, and I close my eyes and see myself as I was then, proud, exultant, happy, standing flushed and radiant before the mirror, arrayed in gleaming white silk and pearls, my heart beating with a new, proud happiness, for there was to be one at the ball that night who was dearer to me than all else besides.

For him I had donned my most becoming dress and chosen the fairest flowers for my hair, and, as I clasped his gift, a gold bracelet on my arm, I stopped and kissed it for his sake.

Oh what a light heart I had that night as I went downstairs, thinking over and over the same glad thought! I was soon to see him, to feel his hand holding mine, to look up into the kind, dark eyes, smiling down on me tenderly and lovingly.

Other men had told me I was fair of face and form—I had heard and heeded not.

Lancelot Ware never paid me as much as a simple compliment, yet the unspoken admiration and chivalric devotion of this brave, courtly son of Mars made my heart beat and my colour come and go as man's voice or presence had never done yet. I had light, gay words and smiles in plenty for others, but in his presence I was silent, feeling strangely happy, content to be near my hero, to hear him speak.

A hero he was in deed, in word, in deed—a soldier, one who had won serious and feared death in its worst and most appalling form many and many a time—brave, undaunted, courageous, counting life a light thing compared with honour—a true soldier, brave as a lion, with the heart of a child, loved, nay, almost worshipped by his men—brave fellows all, ready to follow wherever he led. Some said he was grave and stern. Perhaps he may have been, but to me he was always tender, always the same. And I? I was unworthy of him, and I feel my utter unworthiness now more than I did then.

Oh, if he were here now, by my side in the gloaming, never an angry, scornful word—spoken but never meant—would I utter, never a haughty glance should wound him!

Lancelot! Lancelot! With all my faults I loved him well, and now he can never, never know!

How happy I was that night, dancing with Lancelot! How fast the hours glided by! And then I remember, when the ball was over, going upstairs in the early dawn and sitting down by the open window, watching the first golden flush of sunrise and listening to nature awakening after the night.

All seemed so peaceful, so quiet, the world yet asleep and the red sun rising up over the tree-tops, and sparkling in the dewdrops on the lawn, the birds breaking forth in their first notes of early morn—all bright, promising, and peaceful, the earth looking as it might have looked before sin entered the world, bringing sadness and sorrow in its train.

The sun rose higher and higher, and by degrees the daily busy routine of life commenced, and man went forth to his work and labour until the evening.

The stillness and beauty of the picture were gone, and I shut the window and, full of peaceful thoughts, knelt down and prayed Heaven that I might make Lancelot Ware a good wife, and that it would bless the new life I was so soon to begin.

That calm early summer morning seems only a sad memory now, a little glimpse of my old life, when the sun rose on a world that was to me very bright and promising. How often since then have I wished that I might never see another sun rise!

We were married, and Lancelot brought me home to his grand old house looking out over the troubled sea, where the briny scent of the ocean was borne in through the windows, and we could hear the wash and murmur of the sad waves all the day long.

I should have been happy—I ought to have been happy—in my quiet, peaceful home—content with

the love and companionship of a kind, indulgent husband.

Was it my fault, I wonder, that having been brought up to a life that was one perpetual round of gaiety, I wearied of the quiet monotony of my new life, and yearned for some of the pleasures that had before made part of my existence?

Nearly a year wore away. It was towards the close of autumn, and the long twilight evenings were getting shorter and shorter.

"Lancelot," I said one morning, "Here is a letter from my old school friend, Caroline Dering. Don't you remember her?"

Lancelot laid down his paper.

"Yes—she was the girl who went in for Little Dacres of ours, was she not?"

"Caroline never 'went' in for any one," I replied, indignantly.

Lancelot laughed, and there was a mischievous twinkle in his eyes, as he said:

"Perhaps not; but I remember I was rather afraid of the fair Caroline at one time myself. She sang all Moore's melodies, I recollect, and I had to turn over her music and do the agreeable. Well, and what does she say, Nina?"

"There are no secrets in it, so I can read the letter."

"My own darling Nina—I have been staying with Harry for a fortnight, and leave next week. I must have a peep at you before returning home, being more than anxious to see how you conduct yourself in your new state. I suppose you are awfully grand, and all that? If you can put me up, please write; it seems such an age since we have met. I shall reserve all news till we meet; and with kind regards to Major Ware, and much love to yourself, I remain, dearest, ever your very affectionate

"CAROLINE DERING."

"What a gushing effusion!" commented Lancelot.

"Caroline Dering all over!"

"May I write and tell her to come, Lancelot?"

"Of course, darling. Give her my humble respects—say all that is proper from me; and the carriage shall await her at the station upon any day and at any hour she likes to fix."

So Caroline arrived—a young woman as gay and worldly as myself.

She was pretty, with the prettiness of good colouring and fine black eyes.

She dressed well and walked well, and was by many considered a beauty.

Lancelot never liked her.

Caroline was "fast"—and he hated fastness.

"A woman should be a woman," he would say—"not a man in petticoats."

And Caroline would toss her head, and give him some laughing reply.

I do not know how it began, but after she came I grew more discontented with my life, and began to think it was a little hard to be kept in a quiet country place, where there was never anything going on.

"I suppose, Nina," said Caroline, one evening, "you entertain in great style?"

Lancelot looked up, and replied for me.

"No; Nina and I have settled down like steady old married people, and content ourselves with only a dinner-party now and then."

Caroline raised her eyebrows.

"You speak for yourself, I am sure, Major Ware, Nina, surely you don't mean to scoff at the gaieties of this life—you who used to boast you would dance till your hair was white?"

"She has more sense now," said Lancelot, looking over at me with his kind tender smile. "Nina thinks like me, that life should be made up of more than mere amusement."

"No, Lancelot," I contradicted, rising and going and leaning over him. "I am afraid I like pleasure as much as ever; and, Lancelot, I am longing to give just one fancy ball, to fill this venerable old house for once. Caroline and I have planned it all. May I? Please say 'Yes.'"

He lifted his eyes half sadly to mine, and took my hand in his.

"I thought we had done with balls for ever, Nina."

He must have seen the disappointment in my face at his words, for he added, speaking kindly and earnestly:

"Do you then care so much about it?"

"Care about it, Lancelot! I shall love all that is gay and worldly as long as I live!" was my rash reply.

Caroline laughed—my husband's face grew grave.

"Is that bravado, Nina, or truth?"

"Truth—sober reality. But, Lancelot, may I give the ball, please—only for once?"

"I cannot resist you, as you wish it—yes."

I remember his smiling at my almost childish excitement, for the ball was for the next three weeks the only topic of conversation between Caroline and myself.



[ON THE CLIFF PATH.]

"I wish it were all over," said Lancelot; as for the fiftieth time I explained the arrangements and the pretty decoration we had taken such trouble to plan.

"Over!" echoed Caroline. "Surely this ball of Nina's will not be her last?"

Lancelot shrugged her shoulders.

"Possibly, Miss Dering; but it seems to me that this great ball is hardly worth all the trouble. Everything else is forgotten and neglected in the carrying out of the plans that are to amuse a crowd of people for a few hours. My opinion is that there never was a ball given yet that was worth all the fuss."

"We are simple enough to enjoy such a species of entertainment thoroughly," rejoined Caroline.

"Nina, will you have a gallop this afternoon," asked Lancelot. "You won't be able to hold Caroline if you don't give him exercise."

"Oh, Lancelot, I really can't go out this afternoon! There are such hosts of things to be seen about. After the ball I will ride whenever you like."

Lancelot looked disappointed, and in the afternoon started on his solitary ride.

My first ball was given, and very proud I was of its success; even Lancelot looked pleased, and complimented me on the way I acted as hostess.

It came to an end at last; the gay rooms were deserted, and the ballroom looked dreary and desolate with the dawn breaking in cold and gray.

Lancelot came up and put his arm around me.

"Well, are you satisfied, Nina?"

"Perfectly. Oh, Lancelot, I am so happy!"

"I am glad of it, darling; but are you happy, too, when we are alone together—you and I?"

"Yes, but I love excitement. I should like to go to a dance every night of my life, or a theatre, or something. Don't look so shocked, Lancelot. I should indeed."

"Nina, if I believed half the nonsense you talk, I should be obliged to think I have a very frivolous little wife."

"So you have," I returned, half laughing, half annoyed, for he spoke almost bitterly.

And so ended my great ball.

It was only the commencement, however, of a series of rivalries.

Caroline's visit was prolonged at my request to an indefinite period, and we had luncheon and croquet parties, impromptu dances, private concerts, and all sorts of gaiety within an incredibly short space of time.

Where there is a will there is a way. I carried all before me, and got the credit of being the gayest and the most delightful creature in the county, while I was adored by the young people in the neighbourhood; and Caroline backed me up, and flattered to her heart's content.

Once or twice Lancelot ventured to remonstrate with me, but he was eventually overruled.

"You must stop somewhere, Nina," he said, at last. "This kind of thing cannot go on for ever."

"Yes, it can, Lancelot. We are going to have private theatricals on the twenty-ninth."

His face suddenly grew dark and stern.

"Going to have? You forget I have a voice in the matter."

I laughed as I answered, lifting my eyes to his stern face:

"No, I didn't forget; but, Lancelot, I was afraid you wouldn't allow it; so it was all arranged before hand."

"I will not allow it!" was the crushing reply.

"Nina, I am more than surprised that you should have dared to count me a mere cipher in my house and treat my will and wishes as nothing."

At his voice of stern displeasure—the first words of anger he had ever addressed to me—the quick tears sprang to my eyes, but with the tears came the proud determination to carry my point, and I rose and stood before my husband, flushed and defiant.

"It shall take place! Nothing can alter my plans now."

"Nina!" That was all he said, but, looking up into his face, I realised for the first time that he was my master, and my eyes fell beneath his.

If we had been alone then all would have been different, that sad, stern gaze would have brought me repentant and in tears to his feet. But Caroline Dering was sitting by, bending over her embroidery, a half-smile on her face, and I would not give in. I would have the mastery yet, and, thinking I saw signs of relenting on his face, I pressed my point.

But Lancelot was firm. He did not lose his temper, but his eyes darkened and the stern lines about his mouth deepened. I might have known him well enough to be sure that when once he had said a thing he would never go back from his word. How I hate myself for all that I said that day!

"Stop," said Lancelot, at last. "There should never be a scene like this between husband and wife. Nina, you must obey me. Once for all I forbid the theatricals."

Caroline had left the room, aiming one shot at Lancelot, as she rose from her seat.

"Major Ware, as you are strong, be merciful. You might give in—Nina cannot; she has set her heart on these theatricals."

"Excuse me, Miss Dering," replied Lancelot, sternly, "but I cannot allow any interference between me and my wife."

And then Caroline swept from the room, whispering as she passed, holding her head very high, "Nina, I pity you!"

Her words stung me to the quick—I would not be a meek obedient wife, afraid to have a will of her own.

No, I had a will, and a pretty strong one, as Lancelot would find; so, proud and indignant, I turned from him as he drew near, not in the least angry, with his old tender smile, ready to take me in his arms if I were but willing.

"Nina, I thought you and I knew each other better," he said, reproach in his voice.

"So did I," I returned bitterly, hot tears rolling down my cheeks, my lips quivering, feeling angry and miserable, ready at that moment to do or dare anything.

Lancelot laid his hand gently on my head. "My darling, let us be as if this never had happened."

"Yes," I said, defiant still, "if you withdraw all you have said, and I may still carry out my plans."

He frowned.

"I am not changeable. Do you think it was for the mere pleasure of contradiction that I refused to allow the theatricals? No, Nina; you have not moved me from my purpose—my decision is still the same."

"So is mine," I exclaimed, passionately; "and I will have my own way!"

And snatching my hands away from his kind, firm clasp, I burst into tears.

I was only an idle threat, spoken heedlessly. At that moment I had no idea of carrying out my purpose; for all my reckless boasting, I knew I must give in sooner or later, and in a sudden revulsion of feeling I turned to acknowledge my submission to the stronger will.

But Lancelot was gone. I heard the shutting of the library door, and I knew the bitter and thoughts that were in his heart; all his love and kindness seemed to rise up and stand reproachfully before me.

I felt I must follow him—only to whisper three words, "Lancelot, forgive me!"

I knew his noble nature well—forgiveness granted well; high before asked, reconciliation complete almost without a word; and, my better self conquered, I went to seek my husband.

But on reaching the library I heard a voice in the hall, saying:

"Is Major Ware in? Can I see him?"

"Yes, sir, in the library."

The door opened and shut, and, heavy and sick at heart, I went back to the drawing room.

Caroline came in and put her arms round me.

"Nina, darling, I feel for you; but you have more spirit than to yield. Have the theatricals in spite of him."

"Oh, Caroline, I dare not! Lancelot would be so angry."

"Dare not! Write the invitations and send them off. It will serve him right, Nina! Major Ware may be very good and nice, but he is a great deal too determined. If you do not get the upper hand of your lord and master, he will use the curb with a vengeance."

Poor Caroline, I think she meant well in her hot-headed championship of her friend.

I liked her then, but—I cannot help it—I feel sometimes as if I hated her now.

At luncheon Lancelot never opened his lips, and I was too proud to make the first advance.

And then his horse was brought round, and

without a look or word, he mounted and rode away.

"This is your punishment," said Caroline. "He is breaking you in, Nina, and oh, see his horse—poor deluded creature—it actually dares to exert its own will!"

Something had frightened the noble gray—a new purchase of Lancelot's—it backed and reared, and finally refused to go on.

There was a short struggle for the mastery, kindness and severity were alike tried, and then the stronger will conquered.

Lancelot stooped to caress the horse's neck, and with one quick glance from his dark eyes at the window where we stood, he rode off.

"Got up for your edification!" laughed Caroline. "Major Ware, that was capital!"

I was angry again. I knew Caroline had interpreted Lancelot's glance aright—it was meant to show me how futile it was to contend with him.

My evil spirit was fairly roused, and before post time the invitations were written and sent off without thought or fear of consequences, and with a kind of reckless gaiety I went up to dress for dinner.

I never shall forget how Lancelot looked, when, making my voice steady with an effort, I told him what I had done.

His face grew sterner than I had ever seen it, and his eyes flashed, but there was more of stern than anger in his grave quiet voice, as he replied:

"Nina, I am not one to be trifled with. This has been your first act of disobedience, let it be your last. I shall send and stop the postbag."

My cheeks crimsoned with shame at his stern, well-merited reproof, and a great lump rose in my throat; but his next words sent the blood rushing over my face and brow.

"Heaven knows I have made a bitter mistake! I thought not to have a gay, pleasure-seeking wife, but a companion—one to turn to for sympathy. Nina, surely there are things better worth seeking after than may be found in the frivolities of society?"

Proudly and passionately I faced him.

"You should have told me all this a year ago."

He caught my hands in his.

"Wife, it is early to find we have made a mistake.

Oh, Nina, have you repented already?"

I was unworthy of him—in bitter sorrow I wrote it now.

I lifted my eyes for a moment resolutely to his, determined to die rather than yield, wilfully misunderstanding him to the last; and then, snatching my hands from his that he might not feel their trembling, and turning away that he might not read the truth in my eyes, I answered very calmly, very deliberately, though my heart was beating wildly and I loved him better at that moment than I had ever done, even in the first glad days.

"You have repented; it matters little what I may feel." And then I laughed and added, "I suppose sooner or later all married people find out that they have made a mistake. We have made the discovery sooner than usual—that is all!"

I neither meant nor believed the words I was saying, but how was Lancelot to know that. I knew he loved me as fondly as husband ever loved wife, but how was he to tell that all my words were spoken only in the heat of passion and wild determination born of pride not to let him see my real feelings, or know how his words filled me with pain, and that for all my proud bearing, I carried a heart as heavy as his own.

"What has changed you, Nina," he asked.

"I am not changed," I answered. "I always have been the same, and I cannot alter."

And then, with bowed head, and eyes not daring to meet his, I listened to the sad, pained voice, as, standing beside me, in his own grave tender way, my husband strove to win me back.

In vain.

To all his pleadings I turned a deaf ear; my lips were sealed in stullen, haughty silence.

"Oh, Nina," he burst out at last, "what has come between us? Look at me, and say my wife is her own true self, and loves me still. Come to me, my darling!"

He waited, but no answer came.

I never lifted my voice. In an agony of remorse I now make my confession.

Although I knew the power I had over him—that a look would have brought him to my side and secured the forgiveness I was longing for—I let him turn sadly from the room without a word.

I listened to his footsteps passing along the passage and down the stairs, and then, forcing back the tears I went and stood before the glass, looking long and earnestly at the figure reflected there, a speech Caroline had made that afternoon coming back to me.

"He married you for your beauty, Nina."

I knew he had not done so. I felt it was for myself I had been sought and won, yet her words had a shadow of truth, and furnished an excuse to keep up the quarrel.

I remember so well the dress I wore that night—it was black velvet trimmed with white lace; and I had a bunch of scarlet geraniums in my hair.

Lancelot liked to see me well dressed, and I carried out his wishes to the letter.

The face I saw and criticised so closely was young and fair enough.

I had been told over and over again that I was beautiful; never till that night had I cared whether I was or not.

Now I scanned every feature, looked straight into the dark blue eyes, at the firm, haughty mouth, stroked back the bright brown hair Lancelot's hand had so often caressed, and then went down stairs to conquer, flashing defiance at my husband's grave face as I swept past him into the room.

Caroline told me afterwards what he said on her remarking:

"How well Nina looks when she is angry!"

Lancelot had replied, sadly enough:

"Anger is an expression that may add to beauty in the eyes of some; but for my own part, I am sorry to see it on the face of one I love."

And then Caroline, keeping to her own opinion had said again:

"It becomes Nina, though; don't you think so?"

And he had replied, shortly:

"No, I cannot agree with you, Miss Dering."

Ah, Caroline, does it never smite you now with a pang of regret when you remember how you helped to sow the seeds of discord between man and wife, keeping up the bitter angry feeling that had far better been forgotten?

Nay, I do not blame you; I was far more to blame myself.

The fault was mine, and the punishment, that indeed seems too heavy to bear, is mine also.

That evening, restless and unhappy, books and work alike failing to occupy my thoughts, I went at last to the piano, and sang song after song, all Lancelot's favourites, without faltering, and as I sang my anger died away, and I thought of him, my soldier, my hero, going back to a day-long antecedent—the first time I had known Lancelot—and I seemed to see the old red brick house, half hidden by the dark fir-trees, and sitting alone in the twilight, a little girl weeping as if her heart would break, and her friend, her companion, standing by her, his young handsome face sadly troubled, struggling with the tears his boyish pride refused to let flow.

That was my first sorrow, when Lancelot, the boy-soldier, standing in his uniform, the firelight gleaming and flashing brightly on the sword hanging by his side, came to say good-bye, for before dawn he would be far away—a soldier's work, and perhaps a soldier's grave, before the young hero, who now took his child-friend in his strong arms, the little girl he had loved and petted, and I put my arms round his neck, and with my head on his shoulder, wept out my sorrow, and he said:

"Cheer up, little Nina! I shall come home again to my little wife."

And then he kissed me and cut off a lock of my hair, and went away with tears in his own dark eyes.

Night and day I thought and dreamed of my hero far away, and when no one thought or guessed what I was doing, I would be sitting pouring over the newspaper, reading about the war, following his regiment step by step; and never shall I forget when the brave, daring deeds of the young ensign were honourably mentioned.

Tears of pride fell on the paper as I thought of the many who would read about my hero—how he was ever first and foremost in the battle, the bravest of the brave!

And then he came home, and after one brief visit we did not meet for years; but I never forgot my child love, and when, ten years after, Lancelot again came home, one day he showed me a curl out from a child's hair, and said that he had kept it always, waiting till the time should come when he might claim the owner as his own, that he had made up his mind long ago, and wanted me to repeat the promise:—to say the words I had said that night when he, the soldier, had held the weeping child in his arms, and I had whispered, "Lancelot, I love you!" and had promised to be his wife.

Oh, the happy old days! They came back to me so strongly as I went slowly over the old songs, till I came to "Douglas, Douglas, tender and true!"

Softly and sadly wailing out the broken-hearted words, feeling the truth of every line, a hand was laid upon my shoulder, and Lancelot's voice, deep and tremulous, spoke:

"Nina, look up and say you mean that."

One word, and all had ended there—but that word was never spoken.

With a sudden laugh, to hide a burst of weeping, I glanced up into his face, and said:

"I don't believe in such sentimental nonsense." His hand dropped from my shoulder, and, with a weary sigh, he turned and left the room, as, recklessly, I dashed into a waltz to hide softer and deeper feelings.

How could he tell that at the very touch of his hand, the sound of his voice, my heart swelled, and every nerve thrilled—that at that moment I could have knelt at his feet in sorrow and humiliation?

But, wilful and wayward, I had determined he should be the first to ask forgiveness, and then, but not till then, would I give in.

I have never touched the piano since that night—I shall never touch it again.

If I sat there now, in the darkening gloom, I might fancy that I felt his hand upon my shoulder, that I heard his voice in my ear; and, if I looked up, I might see the tall figure beside me, with the head a little bent, and a half-smile on the grave, noble face, as he stood that night, with love in his eyes and voice, like "Douglas, Douglas, tender and true!" Alas, no! Only in dreams can I see him now, and in fond, sorrowful visions of the past; never more can I hear his voice breathing my name.

I strain but in vain for the firm, quick step, and think and think, till it almost seems as if I must go mad when I press my hands to my aching head and tell myself I need not watch for his coming home, for never will he come home again.

Lancelot was very grave the next day, grave almost to sternness.

After breakfast he came to me:

"Nina, I am going out for a sail. Will you come?"

I looked up to read the expression of his face, but, before I had time to answer, Caroline spoke in her usual impetuous manner:

"Out in that horrid open boat on a day like this! Nina, you won't go, dear?"

"Caroline does not wish it, Lancelot," I replied, in a low tone.

"Oh, never mind me!" said Caroline. "I have letters to write, and shall not be lonely. Do go if Major Ware wants you, Nina."

"Don't go, and do go," I returned, pettishly. "What do you mean, Caroline? I do not intend to go sailing to-day."

"Very well," said Caroline, leaving the room; "only, please, don't stay on my account."

I said nothing, and Lancelot misinterpreted my silence.

Turning away, he remarked, bitterly:

"Nina, there was a time when my wishes were more thought of. Nay," he added, kindly, "I cannot bear to see these tears, Nina. Why will you make us both unhappy? It shall all be forgiven and forgotten if you will be my own loving wife again, darling. Will you not give me one kiss again before I go?"

I was relenting fast, but I would not let him see it yet; and so he went away, silent and sad, kind, gentle, loving to the last.

I went out that afternoon alone, with tender, sad feelings in my heart, sorry and penitent, to meet Lancelot, to lay my hand in his humbly, with regret for the past and promises for the future, to allow, what was a hard thing to do, that I was in the wrong.

Yet it would be sweet to make the confession to him, so noble and so true, for I knew him well.

Never a reproach would he utter; all would be as if our quarrel had never been.

And, full of good resolutions, I went up on to the high rugged cliff to catch the first distant glimpse of Lancelot's boat returning.

The afternoon was wild and windy, and, hot and breathless from battling with the wind, I reached the top of the cliff, and stood looking out over the sea, which looked wild and dreary enough, with white crests to the waves, and overhead a storm-streaked sky.

Down on the beach lay great shining, tangled masses of seaweed, brought up by each mighty wave.

A group of fishermen were standing and sitting by the boats, drawn high up on to the beach, busy mending their nets, looking out seaward, and now and then lifting their rough, weather-beaten faces to the threatening sky, the white sea-gulls flitting to and fro, or dancing upon the waves.

The afternoon wore away; and then, far out, a mere white speck upon the horizon, I saw Lancelot's boat returning.

The sun was setting, a wild, stormy sunset flushing the sky, where the blood-red sun dipped into the water on the western horizon.

It was a strange, awful sunset, and never shall I forget it.

The red golden light shone with weird brilliancy.

HIS WIFE: "Ahem! Well, it may be my bad taste, but I own I have hitherto failed to detect the beauty of Mrs. Jones. Now, Mr. Jones is good-looking, if you like!"

ANON: "Jones good-looking. Come—hang it, Maria, Jones is a very good fellow, and all that; but I may say I've never perceived his good looks!"

JUST after the battle of Guilford, the British army marched to Wilmington.

About the middle of the afternoon, the van of the army, led by Lord Cornwallis, reached the house of Mrs. Bell.

The Earl dismounted and entered. After looking about him for a space, he said abruptly:

"Madam, where is your husband?"

"In Greene's camp," was the short reply.

"Is he an officer or soldier?"

"No, he is not; but he knew it was better to be among friends than fall into the hands of enemies."

"Very well, madam; I must make your house my headquarters for a few days, and take your mill to grind for my soldiers."

"Sir," said she, "you have the power to do as you please; but after using your mill do you mean to turn it?"

"Why do you ask that?"

"Answer me first and I'll tell you afterward."

"No, then," said Cornwallis, "your mill shall not be burned or property injured, but my officers must have provisions for the army. I shall remain in your house, and my presence will protect you from insult, for no soldier of mine would dare plunder my headquarters."

"Well now, sir," rejoined the stout-hearted woman, "as you were so kind as to answer my question, I will answer yours. If your lordship had intended to burn my mill after using it, I intended to save you the trouble by burning it myself at once!"

Cornwallis took no offence, but began giving orders in a quick, nervous manner.

He walked up and down the room like one ill at ease, and turning quickly, he told Mrs. Bell that he had just annihilated Greene's army, and could fear no harm from him.

Presently he opened the back door and looked nervously up the road for a few moments, then resumed his walk to and fro.

The air drew through the room and the goodly lady rose and shut the door.

The earl opened it again and gazed upon the road.

He appeared to be in trouble, and could not keep still a moment.

He would sit in a chair only to find his feet at once and return to his pacing.

Again Mrs. Bell closed the door.

Cornwallis immediately opened it, saying sternly that he wished it would remain so.

His hostess asked him the reason.

"Why," said he, "I don't know but Greene may be coming down on me at any moment."

"But I thought you said just now that you had annihilated him, and feared nothing further."

"Well, madam," said the earl, with a sigh, "to tell you the truth, since Heaven made me I never saw such fighting. Another such victory would annihilate me!"

STATISTICS.

INCOMES OF FRENCH AND ENGLISH CLERGY.—It may not be without interest, to compare the financial position of the French clergy with that of the similar body in England, as shown by statistics officially issued in the two countries. The Cardinal Archbishop of Paris receives from the State 60,000*fr.*; the Cardinals of Bordeaux, Rouen, Cambrai, Rennes, and the Archbishop of Lyons, each 30,000*fr.*; twelve other French Archbishops, 20,000*fr.*; and the sixty-nine bishops of France and Algeria each 15,000*fr.* A sum of 92,000*fr.* is, moreover, allowed to the episcopacy for the expense of diocesan visits. In England the stipends of the prelates vary from £4,000 to £5,000. The Archbishop of York and the Bishop of London each receive £10,000, the Bishop of Durham £8,000, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Primas, £15,000. In France the vicars-general receive annually, of Paris, 4,500*fr.*; those of the eighteen archbishoprics, 3,500*fr.*; of the diocese of Algiers, Constantine, and Orlans, 3,000*fr.*; and of the dioceses of France, to the number of 167, each 2,500*fr.*; of in all 495,800*fr.* The fifteen canons of Paris receive each 2,400*fr.*, and the fourteen of Algiers the same, while the other 699 canons in

France only get 1,600*fr.* each, a total of 1,157,600*fr.* Relative to the curés, the arch-priest of Notre Dame at Paris receives 2,400*fr.*; the sixty-five other corresponding ecclesiastical dignitaries in France, 1,600*fr.*; 3,374 permanent curés in the country, stipends varying from 1,600*fr.* to 1,200*fr.*; giving a total of 4,439,400*fr.* with certain sums in addition for casual expenditure. Finally, the state gives 81,549,000*fr.* to 30,992 acting priests in France; 635,100*fr.* to 334 in Algeria; and 4,175,550*fr.* to 2,279 vicars. The Established Church in England counts 12,054 ecclesiastics, of whom 6,752 receive an annual sum of from £200 to £500; 1,882 an average revenue of £772; and nine a stipend of £2,000 each; while the rector of Halesall has £5,500.

THE DEAREST SPOT ON EARTH.

A restless youth, whose thoughts, on travel bent,

Gave to his mind a sullen discontent—

Whose visions ever prompted him to roam,

From the plain precincts of his family home—

Once found four travellers at a wayside inn,

Whose wanderings in many climes had been,

And whom he sought to quiet his unrest

By naming the one spot supremely blessed

Beyond all others that their steps had found,

In traversing the green earth round and round.

One said: "Aye, such a spot there is, my boy,

Whose faintest recollection is a joy

Beyond all others—North, South, East, or West—

By years of varied travel proved the best—

The worth and goodness of whose humble name

Are seldom sounded by the tramp of fame."

Another: "Comrade, by thy glistening eye,

And trembling lip, and soft, regretful sigh,

I know the spot thou dost in joy recall,

And likewise deem it the most blessed of all."

The third, though travel-worn for many a year,

Vouchsafed no other answer than a tear

And an unbending of his winnowed head,

In mute assent to that which had been said,

The fourth—a bronzed and gloomy man—

Said: "Comrades, in my wide and varied span

Of weary wayfaring, that spot of ground,

Which ye describe so well, I too have found—

The eddy-gem of all this human whirl,

Of every clime the jewel and the pearl;

And would that tetter I might turn my feet,

To live, to die, in its serene retreat."

Breathless, the youth, with rising colour,

Cried:

"Name me that spot, of every land the pride!

That I may straightway seek it o'er the wide

Waste,

And thus much fruitless toil and wandering save."

"To find that haven, so supremely blessed,"

The elder answered, speaking for the rest,

"There is no need o'er land or sea to roam.

'Tis here—its everywhere—its name is Home!"

O, youth, believe not that long seasons spent

In restless wandering can that content

And rest and comfort and sweet peace supply.

Which that loved name must ever signify

To him who hallows in his inmost breast

Country and kindred over all the rest!"

N. D. U.

GEMS.

THE joys, the sorrows, and the trials of yesterday—all are past. We have filled another page in our life-book, and hasten on, perhaps, almost only to blot the next with tears of regret for the deficiencies of its predecessor. But what we have written is unchangeable, "whether it be good or whether it be

evil;" its effects will continue into eternity, and will determine its status in the future world. Then, while we still have the pen of life within our hold, should we not use it to record noble deeds, kindly words and thoughts, that our remaining yesterday may be pleasant readings for the future?

A LIFE of full and constant employment is the only safe and happy one.

HAVE frank explanations with friends in cases of affronts. They sometimes save a perishing friendship; but secret discontent and mistrust always end badly.

THOSE who have become addicted to evil habits must conquer them as they can—and they must be conquered, or they will conquer us, and destroy our peace and happiness. And those who have not yet yielded to bad habits must be on their guard lest they be unexpectedly assailed and subdued.

TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD.—Falsehood flies swift as the wind, and truth creeps behind her at a snail's pace. But falsehood makes so many twistings—that truth, keeping steadily on, looking neither to the right nor left, overtakes her before long.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

TO MAKE A DELICIOUS LEMON PIE.—Grate the rind and pulp of one lemon into one cup of maple molasses, add a half-teaspoonful of flour, batter the size of a shallot, drop in little pieces over the mixture; make a good puff paste for top and bottom. Bake in a quick oven.

WELSH RABBIT.—Cut a piece of bread about six by three inches; take off all the crust, toast it, and butter it on one side; cut a slice of rich cheese of the thickness of the bread, and sufficient to cover the bread; place it before a clear fire at an angle of forty-five degrees, where it will toast briskly.

CLAM FRITTERS.—Twenty-five clams, chopped fine; add to these a batter made with a half-pint of the clam-liquor, a heaping pint of flour, and two eggs well beaten, soda, about the size of a pea, dissolved in water; fry in hot lard.

HALLIBUT OR HADDOCK.—First boil your fish; lay on fish dish; take a cupful of the water the fish was boiled in; add half-pound of butter; beat five eggs, the juice of four lemons, some grated nutmeg together. When the butter has boiled once or twice, add the eggs and pour it over the fish; garnish with parsley; you can add a little sugar to the gravy.

OMELETTE SOUFFLE.—Separate the yolks from the whites of six eggs; mix with the yolks four spoonfuls of powdered sugar, half of a lemon skin, chopped fine (or vanilla); beat up and make a paste, like as for biscuits. Then beat up the whites of the eggs, mix them lightly with the yolks, without breaking the latter too much; butter the bottom of a dish, pour in the omelette, cover it with sugar, and cook in the oven. Seven or eight minutes suffice to cook it. When the omelette rises and is a fine colour, serve it promptly.

MISCELLANEOUS.

MAGIC OF A WORD.—Mother is a word to which every bosom responds. It finds its way to our hearts in our youth, and retains its hold upon us in our age. If fathers are looked up to for precept, principle, and example, mothers are relied on for tenderness and enduring affection. Fathers are strongholds of safety; mothers are sources of love and consolation. The word mother is a soft, balmy breeze coming up from the valley, sweet, soothing and grateful; cooling the fevered brow, calming the ruffled spirit, and tranquillizing the agitated heart. What voice was ever like the soft voice of a mother?

WITHIN the last five years, seven hundred Buddhist temples in Japan have been converted to other uses than for worship.

HAPPINESS.—It is truly wonderful how cheap happiness used to be. It lay about, like the sunshine, within arm's length of everybody. It used to grow in the field and by the wayside; we have found it there—but not lately. Sometimes five speckled eggs in a grassy nest constituted it; sometimes four beautiful blue ones in the lilies. It used to swim in the transparent waters of the brook, and turn us its silvery and mottled sides, like a polished sabre, sprinkled with the colour of fame—which is generally understood to be crimson. We have found it many a time beside a mossy stone, when it looked very much like a spring flower; we have seen it coming down in the snow, and heard it descending in the rain. What a world of happiness. It used to be crowded into a Saturday afternoon! An old newspaper with cedar ribs, a sail like three bushaws, and a penny's worth of twice, have constituted, many a time—many an old time—the stock in trade of one perfectly happy.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

HENRY.—Your intentions are improper. Girls placed at boarding schools are removed from the affectionate surveillance and influence of their parents, and therefore are less capable of knowing what is best for them. Your passion may be very strong, but do you think it fair to inveigle a girl living among strangers into an engagement of which not only her friends, but herself, may hereafter strongly disapprove. All clandestine courtships are wrong, and offensive to the proprieties of our domestic life.

ALPHA.—What a true man wants with a wife is her companionship, sympathy and love. The way of life has many dreary places in it, and man needs a companion to go with him. A man is sometimes overtaken by misfortunes; he meets with failure and defeat; trials and temptations beset him, and he needs one to stand by and sympathize. He has some hard battles to fight with poverty, enemies and with sin; and needs a woman that, when he puts his arm around her, he feels he has something to fight for; she will help him to fight; that will put her lips to his ear and whisper words of counsel, and her hand to his heart and impart inspiration. All through life, through storm and through sunshine.

MOLIN DARTMO.—1. The chemicals that would remove what you term the superfluous hair from your arm might make a scar, the appearance of which would be far more unsightly than the hair; they might farther, through absorption, injure your general health. Therefore, we cannot recommend you anything of the kind. 2. A mixture of elder-flower water and glycerine, rubbed on the hands at bedtime, has a tendency to make the hands white, especially if kid gloves are worn through the night. 3. Glycerine is an oily and wholesome substance possessing great curative powers, and could not wither the skin. 4. Beau Brummell was a celebrated gallant who flourished in the reign of George IV., and who was noted, among other things, for the quantity of white cravats he would crumple and soil before he could tie one round his neck in a manner that was satisfactory to his vanity. As the Beau's valet removed his arms full of crumpled cravats from his master's dressing-room he was wont to exclaim "these are the failures!"

TURKISH Y.—You complain that your husband uses a "vehementness of language far more than the occasion requires," when he is irritated. It is not an uncommon case; and mild as well as stern men are prone to this kind of exaggeration in their language. But he you not tempted to say anything sarcastic or violent in retaliation; the bitter repentance must needs come to any wife who does. Men frequently forget what they have said, but seldom what is uttered by their wives. They are grateful, too, for forbearance in such cases; for, whilst asserting most loudly that they are right, they are often conscious that they are wrong. Give a little time, as the greatest boon you can bestow to the irritable feelings of your husband, and his vehemence of language will subside harmlessly.

ROSA NELLIE.—We are afraid that you entered too readily into the wishes of the young man. A love lightly won is but little prized, and you yielded before the newly-lighted fire of love in his heart had time to burn up clearly. For the present avoid his company.

CURIOUS.—1. Most decidedly we would advise you to try no such experiment. The effects of opium are always prejudicial, and it is still more difficult to break the "accursed chain" of its influence than to escape the terrible dominion of alcohol. You must remember that De Quincey deeply expiated any early pleasure he derived from its use by the fearful torture of his later visions, and only finally escaped with "the skin of his teeth." The fine intellect of that sweet singer, Coleridge, was enmeshed by the slavery of this drug; men of feeble and less active intellects invariably succumb altogether. Witness the terrible examples amongst the natives of the "Flower Land." 2. Regarding the effect of hashish, little is known, but that little indicates that it is more injurious than opium. The roseate description in Monte Christo of the visions induced by its use are not reliable. Perhaps the poet of the fiendish Baudelaire, has left the most remarkable account of its influence. 3. Absinthe doubtless has a somewhat similar though modified effect on the sensorium and is undeniably very injurious.

MARE ALLARDYCE.—The Dead Sea is so named from no living object being found in it. The northern bottom is almost flat, the greatest depth is 125 feet; near the shore the bottom is generally a saline incrustation; intermediate are mud and cubes of pure salt. Its shores

are covered with incrustations of salt, and footmarks in an hour's time become covered with crystallizations. Captain Lynch feels confident that the result of his expedition confirm to the very letter the history of the Holy Land, as regards the sunken cities.

MARY SUNDAY complains of his cousin's lover falling asleep when he comes to see her. A most ungallant practice; but some young men are so heavy-headed that they cannot help it. Nothing, though, is more annoying to a young woman, and the best thing you can do is to leave the correction in her hands. A hint from her would soon render him wakeful enough.

VIOLET.—It is very indiscreet for a young lady to go out for a walk with a young gentleman to whom she is not engaged, but who is actually engaged to another young lady.

CONSTANT READER.—We cannot advise you without knowing more of your case than you have stated; but we think that as the "boy" upon whom your affections are so "irrevocably fixed" shows so much discretion you had better imitate him, and not "ought to be won."

EPITOLARY.—To restore faded vitality, get one ounce of powdered nut-pall, boil it for some time in a pint of white wine, wet the paper with it, and the writing will be revived.

DARIN, eighteen, medium height, wishes to correspond with a thoroughly domesticated young lady about the same age.

DON JUAN.—The symptoms you describe indicate a weak constitution. Bathe your head frequently with cold water, but do not weaken your health by using those poisonous wafers to which you refer. Writing very good.

MARY R.—We are not acquainted with the firm you mention, so can give you no advice respecting it, but we deeply sympathize with you in your foreign position and believe as you do that your undertaking must be successful.

THE LITTLE CHEST.

A certain gentleman possessed
A curious little wooden chest,
With pearl and ivory inlaid,
Which to a neighbour he displayed
As something wonderfully fine
In execution and design;
"And what is queer," the owner said,
"This chest defies the shrewdest hand
To open it—and yet the box
Is not secured by bolts or locks,
Or any other kind of catch;
Hoop, haap, or button, spring or latch.
Of course the chest ('tis fastened now)
Is opened easily—but how?
Faith! that's a secret! and I'll lay
Just any sum you choose to say
That you, my boy! can't find it out!"
"Done!" cried the other, with a shout;
"Down with your back! The box was made;
The stain upon the table laid
And then the neighbour takes the chest,
An hour for ten minutes—does his best
To find the secret. All in vain!
For, though he tries and tries again,
Now pushing here; now pulling there,
With all the force the box will bear,
It will not budge. Do what he will,
The task defies his utmost skill!"
"Confound the chest!" he cries at last,
"The fiend surely holds it fast!"
At least, I own the stakes are yours;
Now, please to show me what secures
The little chest so snug and tight;
And let your secret see the light!"
The owner took the little chest,
And with his hand he firmly pressed
Against the lid (as one essay
A common snuff-box lid to raise)
And lo! he opened it with ease!
And now the wondering neighbour sees
(Like many cunning people who
Straightforward acts can never do,
And here's the moral of my tale!)
His labours were of no avail
Because the idiot, in all he did,
Made no attempt to lift the lid:
Which, being pressed with gentle force,
Flew open—as a thing of course!

J. G. S.

MEDDA, seventeen, a brunette, dark blue eyes, considered pretty, medium height, wishes to correspond with a tall, dark young gentleman, with a view to matrimony.

EWELTE, seventeen, fair, light blue eyes, golden hair, medium height, considered good looking, would like to correspond with a tall, dark, good looking young gentleman.

FAY, a jolly little girl with brown hair and large black eyes, pretty and affectionate, would like to correspond with a young gentleman between twenty-one and twenty-eight.

CLAUDA, twenty, fair, with a comfortable income, would like to correspond with a pretty young lady, with a view to matrimony.

E. M. K. and **STAR SHELL,** two seamen in the Royal Navy, wish to correspond with two fair young ladies. E. M. K. is twenty-two, tall, fair, fond of home and music. Star Shell is twenty, tall, good looking, and would make a good girl happy.

WILLIE, an assistant schoolmaster, twenty, medium height, good looking, with good prospects, would like to correspond with a young lady about his own age; respondent must be pretty, fond of home and music, of a loving disposition and domesticated.

FAIR NELLIE, twenty-seven, tall, considered good looking, would like to correspond with a seaman in the Royal Navy, between twenty-seven and thirty; a petty officer preferred.

STARBOARD, a seaman in the Royal Navy, twenty, dark, tall, wishes to correspond with a pretty, thoroughly domesticated young lady about nineteen, with a view to matrimony.

medicated young lady about nineteen, with a view to matrimony.

C. H. and A. L., two friends in the Royal Navy, wish to correspond with two young ladies. C. H. is twenty-one, medium height, dark complexion, dark eyes, curly hair. A. L. is twenty-three, medium height, fair complexion, light hair, hazel eyes.

S. B. H., a widower, fifty-four, with one child, a good home, and about 500 l. cash, would like to correspond with a respectable lady, with a view to matrimony; respondent must be about the same age, of a loving disposition.

BEATIE, nineteen, rather tall, good looking, brown hair, fair complexion, would like to correspond with a thoroughly domesticated young woman, with a view to matrimony.

TOM, twenty-five, medium height, fair complexion, brown hair and eyes, wishes to correspond with a good looking young lady about his own age, with a view to matrimony.

K. R., seventeen, domesticated, good looking, fond of home, loving disposition, wishes to correspond with a young man.

MAB, twenty-two, fair complexion, loving disposition, with good expectations, would like to correspond with a young gentleman of a loving disposition, with a view to matrimony.

Q., seventeen, considered good looking, would like to correspond with a young gentleman, with a view to matrimony.

KATE, fair complexion, considered good looking, would like to correspond with a fair young man about twenty.

CHARLES, twenty-one, medium height, with good expectations, wishes to correspond with a well educated young lady about twenty-one, with a view to matrimony.

NALLA, twenty-one, good looking, dark brown hair and eyes, wishes to correspond with a young man between twenty-five and thirty.

WILLIE, twenty-seven, medium height, considered good looking, fair, possessed of a large estate and good income, wishes to correspond with a well educated young lady.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

ANNE is responded to by—A. F., fair, who thinks he is all she requires.

E. M. A. by—Lu Hoc Signo Spee Maa, medium height, dark complexion, blue eyes, and thinks he is all she requires.

ANNE by—Albert W., fair complexion, good position and prospects.

HENRIETTA by—F. B. C. P., twenty, medium height, dark, considered good looking, fond of home, a steward in the merchant service.

SWEET ANNE by—True Blue, an independent gentleman, well educated, thirty-eight, considered good looking.

VILLAGE BEAUTY by—Artful Joe, medium height, twenty-one, dark hair, blue eyes, considered good looking.

SAM by—Milly, well educated, musical, fond of home and children, in a good position, and thinks she is all he requires.

TOM by—Louise, considered good looking, musical and domesticated.

JACK by—Edwin, thirty-two, holds a government appointment with good salary, good prospects, fond of home.

NATTA by—Reuben, rather tall, considered handsome, has a moderate income, fond of home, and wishes to get settled in life.

E. B. by—Watt, tall, dark, and in good circumstances.

STRAHAN by—Scotch Lassie, very accomplished, fond of music and dancing.

TOM by—Isabella, eighteen, a Roman Catholic, rather tall, considered good looking, thoroughly domesticated, good tempered, very fond of home and music.

NATTA by—Lighthouse T., thirty, tall, dark, very good looking, in a good business of his own; and by—F. H. J., twenty-five, medium height, well educated, rather dark, good hair and eyes, well connected, but with only 500 l. per annum at present.

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